

*The Economy of Action and Word
in Shakespeare's Plays*

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ABBREVIATIONS OF THE PLAYS

The First Part of King Henry VI	1 H. VI
The Second Part of King Henry VI	2 H. VI
The Third Part of King Henry VI	3 H. VI
King Richard III	R. III
Titus Andronicus	Titus
Love's Labour's Lost	L. L. L.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	Two Gent.
The Comedy of Errors	C. of E.
The Taming of the Shrew	Taming
Romeo and Juliet	R. & J.
A Midsummer Night's Dream	M. N. D.
King Richard II	R. II
King John	K. J.
The Merchant of Venice	M. of V.
The First Part of King Henry IV	1 H. IV
The Second Part of King Henry IV	2 H. IV
Much Ado About Nothing	Much Ado
The Merry Wives of Windsor	M. W. W.
As You Like It	As You
Julius Caesar	J. C.
King Henry V	H. V
Troilus and Cressida	T. & C.
Hamlet	Ham.
Twelfth Night	Tw. N.
Measure for Measure	M. for M.
All's Well That Ends Well	All's Well
Othello	Oth.
King Lear	Lear
Macbeth	Mac.
Timon of Athens	Timon
Antony and Cleopatra	A. & C.
Coriolanus	Cor.
Pericles	Per.
Cymbeline	Cym.
The Winter's Tale	W. T.
The Tempest	Temp.
King Henry VIII	H. VIII



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PREFATORY NOTE

Motto: "Such lovers (of drama) read a play more or less as if they were actors who had to study all the parts ... This, carried through a drama, is the right way to study the dramatist Shakespeare."
A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Introduction.

The present essay wants to point out how, and to what extent, Shakespeare puts the actions of his players into the words he makes them speak, and if there is any development in his technique of doing so. I shall, therefore, have to draw up an inventory of his gestic material and of his gestic possibilities; this inventory will then have to be sifted from the point of view of its gestic quality: we shall have to see if there is any artistic progress and in what it consists; and lastly we shall have to show if there is any increase in the number of gestures implied in the text.

A first, introductory, chapter tries to establish the principles governing the relation between action and word. And as gestures are never, or rarely, quite detached from their surroundings, there must follow a chapter on gestures connected with things. How much are things implied in the poet's plan of a play? This chapter introduces the third dimension: the milieu, the first sphere being that of sculpture (static), the second that of movement (functional). The third brings the body in contact with the things of the world.

While the third chapter connects gestures and things, the fourth is to emphasize the fact that gestures do not appear all of a sudden; that they proceed from others and introduce those that will follow, and are, therefore, part of an organic whole. Gestures, like words, are gregarious, and go in groups; they make sentences and should be studied as such.

On the other hand, gestures often spring from the minutest elements of language, from single sounds; or from the rhythm of the line. Gaps in a verse must not necessarily be regarded as proofs of the poet's inability to write "smooth verse".

The main chapter of the first part is that on Shakespeare's style. We shall have to show in it that it is hardly possible to classify the poet by one of the traditional terms of the history of art, as Renaissance, Baroque, or Realism.

In a second part of our essay, in which we mean to specify the main groups of Elizabethan gesturing, we shall first have to speak of the deictic gesture, the prototype of all gestures. To a certain extent, all gestures are deictic: they want to draw our attention to some fact or thing. Invocation is another fundamental type of human gesticulation; it shows man in his subjection to his fellow man or to God. Three chapters on negative gestures (10-12)

will be followed by a psychological chapter on joy and anger, in which the two basic utterances of pleasure and displeasure, of sympathy and antipathy will be studied. It will become apparent that, even in comedy, the number of "negative" signs forms an overwhelming majority. We might say that the Renaissance, with its ideal of harmony, was all the more conscious of the slightest disturbance of that ideal.

General Principles of Gestology

1. ACTION AND WORD

To act—in the double sense of doing a deed or performing a theatrical part—is to make visible an idea which is hidden in the person who acts. To act is to utter, to carry out what pre-exists inside as a spiritual plan on which to work; to act is to make visible. Whenever a creature acts, it is induced to do so either by an idea or a feeling. As long as we operate on the basis of such a plan, we act.

As soon as the idea and the word fade away and eventually quite disappear, we no longer act but only move. The mimosa does not act, it unconsciously re-acts. Engines do not act, they work when manipulated; but man's thought acts through them. Action is based on thought, which is again intimately connected with the human word. Action is conscious, motion is unconscious.

A yet more spiritual form is action used as a means of expression. If I take a book from my shelf, I do not mean to emit a thought or feeling; if I shake my head or nod, a feeling, thought, or wish is uttered. As far as action is expressive, it is gesture (cf. N.E.D.: "Gesture: A movement of the body or of any part of it. Now only in a restrictive sense: A movement expressive of thought or feeling."). This gestic utterance may be addressed to a person, or not. Peter may be quite alone in his room and yet make a gesture of despair or a caper. Psychology might explain this as a means of releasing an inner conflict or passion. It is a soliloquy in gestures. If Peter threatens John with his clenched fist, we speak of a communicating gesture. It is but a little step from this back to the simple action of knocking his adversary down.

By means of his gestures and words, the stage-actor tells us the story of a person other than himself. All that he does and says on the stage has one purpose: to adorn this communication. Accidental or reflex actions or anything unpremeditated should be discarded from the actor's recital. The player's momentary mood and his personal gestic habit must not creep into his play. He may, but he need not, be affected by what he says or does. But even if the performer of the Hamlet part usually feels a catch in his voice when he comes to "The rest is silence", he, nevertheless, has to precontrive every little item during the rehearsals. He should never forget that he is an actor, not a liver of his part.¹ He should be aware of the fact that *μῖμος* means 'imitator' and that his trade was called *ἀπόκρισις*. The habitus of the person-

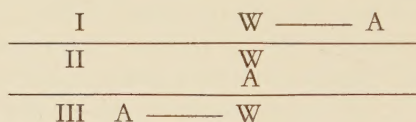
¹ Goethe, *Rules for Actors*, 1805, § 35.

age he embodies must completely pervade him for a two hours' time. In the dissembling scenes of Hamlet, the actor's own gesticulations are not only veiled by the assumed gesturing of the regular Hamlet character, but even by a third layer, by Hamlet's affected insanity. Elizabethan actors seem to have answered to this demand to such an extent that they "continued to act outside the theatre" (Joseph, p. 90).

Thus motion is the unconscious movement of an (inanimate) body, action is work inspired by some idea, and gesture is action with the purpose of thought-communication. As the actor is a story-teller, the ideal stage only knows gestures.

Having thus tried to define the essence of gesture, we shall attempt to delineate the mutual connections of gesture and word in the drama. Thought or feeling, as expressed in a drama, can manifest themselves after their expression in words, or simultaneously, or before it. The actor may say: "I am going to kill him ...", or, while he stabs his adversary, cry: "Take this!", or, stage-hours later, rehearse: "... then burst his mighty heart ... great Caesar fell."²

If W is to stand for the word of the text, and A for the action of the player, we get the following diagram:



² Gestic stragglers like "great *Caesar* fell" are not rare in Shakespeare. In M.N.D. (3. 1) Peter begins to cry "O monstrous. O strange. We are hanted; pray masters, flye masters, helpe", without any further explanation. Eight lines later there is a stage-direction which is obviously misplaced: "*Enter Piramus with the Affe head.*" Again we may suppose that there had been a prompter's remark somewhere near the place of Bottom's appearance which the printer did not know where to insert exactly. The indications for the player have come to nothing here. But we get all that we need in the next scene, when Puck gives Oberon an account of what has happened. Shakespeare's text automatically corrects the displaced stage-direction and puts it in the right place.

My Mistris with a monster is in loue,

...

The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,

Who Piramus presented, in their sport,

Forfooke his Scene, and entred in a brake,

When I did him at this aduantage take,

An Affes nole I fixed on his head.

Anon his Thisbie must be answered,

And forth my Mimmick comes: when they him spie,

... away his fellowes flye.

Words alone are rare in the ordinary drama; some ages have had a tendency towards soliloquy: Seneca, French Classicism, and some modern playwrights are typical representatives of this kind of drama. Gesture alone is the dominion of pantomime and dance, the one a rather primitive, the latter a highly developed artistic instrument. In some cases the dramatist omits or forgets to indicate a gesture in his text, and such an omission must be countervailed by the actor's (or reader's) ingenuity. Editors may insert a stage-direction and in Elizabethan texts it is often uncertain whether the direction is the poet's addition, or the prompter's or printer's.

The student of a text will sometimes be at a loss whether a word or phrase demands a gesture or not. Sometimes the gestic content of a word is obvious; we then speak of an explicit action-word: "This (i.e. sword) is too heauy / Let me see another ..." (Ham. 5. 2. 275). In other cases, however, a gesture is only intimated, as in "Where yon'd pine does stand ..." (A. & C. 4. 12). Such phrases will be called implicit action-words in this essay. It is often difficult and somewhiles impossible to keep the two categories asunder; neither shall I do so in the statistical part. Occasionally the text doubtlessly demands a gesture, but with a very dim allusion only. As this is mostly the case with the word "thus", I shall style this class of gestures the "thus"-type: "... with Armes encombred thus ..." (Ham. 1. 5. 173).

Of course, other classifications may be found for other purposes. In his book on "Shakespeare and the Actors" (p. xv of the Introduction), Sprague gives the following table of categories applicable to stage-business:

1. Action, as called forth by the lines themselves (i.e. our explicit type);
2. inexact demand for gestures (i.e. our "thus"-type);
3. business appropriate to the lines without being demanded by them, the so-called "by-play" (i.e. more or less our implicit type);
4. business momentarily effective, but out of keeping with the plain meaning of what Shakespeare wrote. (Without correspondence in our system.)

Sprague is concerned with the post-Shakespearean stage, whereas our aim is to determine the stage-business of the Globe.

The sense of gestures, as anything else, eventually "goes into the dark". Quintilian calls conversation by gestures an "omnium hominum communis sermo". But such a code of expressive movement is valuable for one epoch only, it is not settled for all ages or all zones. Its signs may become incomprehensible like Greek or Sanskrit words. On the stage we expect to find the gestic idiom of our age. The actor's or playwright's raw-material is the gesture of every-day life which varies from age to age and from country to country: the Chinese nod to deny a fact; today we clasp our hands for prayer, while in Shakespeare's day the same action was used to signify "tristitia animi" (John Bulwer); and though we still put our fingers on our lips ("silentium indico!"), we no longer touch our lips with three fingers

to denote adoration. Sacred gestures, too, lose their sense: the erotic and occult gesture of the “fig” served, in Shakespeare’s day, no longer to avert danger from the doer but to challenge an enemy (2 H. VI, 5.3.123; R. & J. 1.1). If we turn over the pages of a book like Bulwer’s *Chirologia* or *Chironomia*,³ we recognize at first glance that much of 17th century gesturing cannot be considered as “omnium hominum communis sermo” any longer, though it was quite understandable in Bulwer’s day. Much of what he gives had general currency in England—but would it have been accepted by an Italian or Spaniard, not to speak of an inhabitant of the then newly discovered countries across the ocean?⁴

Thus gesture, both in its plan and execution, is strongly influenced by the style of the epoch, the nation of the actor. The magnificent pathos of the Latin peoples, the over-refined formality of the French Court, the naturalistic tendency of the Victorians, modern symbolism, and the extremely stylized etiquette of the Javanese, Japanese, and Chinese all require special texts of dramas. Within one civilization, the later generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessors. Renaissance gesturing is to a great extent obliged to the mediaeval art of Rhetoric—as B.L. Joseph and his school point out—and the Elizabethan audience were acquainted with the tricks of the rhetorical trade, as “the art of rhetorical delivery ... was taught to the school-boys, and practised by the lawyers, divines, and public speakers” (Joseph, p. 1). And the author just cited continues: “According to sixteenth century and seventeenth century writings ... stage-playing and rhetorical delivery were so alike, that whoever knows ... exactly what was taught to the Renaissance orator cannot be far from knowing ... what was done by the actor on the Elizabethan stage” (Joseph, p. 1).

Francis Bacon has an anecdote about Demosthenes (Joseph, p. 2) who called “Action—Action—Action” the “chiefe Parts of an Oratour”. A great number of books of the Elizabethan epoch deal with the intimate secrets of rhetoric. In spite of Shakespeare’s demand that acting should be a mirror of nature, a great deal of the bombast survived up to the eighteenth century in most of the countries of Europe, a fact of which the engravings of Daniel Chodowiecki are a reminder.

The *modern stage* is too complex to be dealt with in a few sentences. Its gestology would require a volume of its own. On the one hand, the plays have developed into a sort of scenario. This is the case in Bernard Shaw’s

³ B.L. Joseph’s book contains many facsimiles of etchings from Bulwer’s treatises.

⁴ On page 61 of his essay on Dante, Johannes Oeschger points out how a certain gesture disappears through the ages: „... eine gestorbene Gebärde ... Wer denkt denn, dass Gebärden so gänzlich verloren gehen können!” (“... a dead gesture ... Who should think that gestures may so completely get lost!”).

plays, where most of the gestures have been projected into the stage-direction: "smiling brightly at him"⁵, "feeling that he has lost ground, brings down his two fists squarely on the table, and inflates his chest imposingly to cure the unwelcome and only too familiar sensation" (both quotations from *Saint Joan*). On the other hand, grown out of the former type and yet so different from it, there is the quiet non-activity of the partly conversational solemnity-play of the *Family Reunion* type. We are probably too near to these productions to tell what will come out of them. The gestology of the stage will doubtlessly be influenced by that of the screen.

The stage and its gestures may be threatened (and have been) by a tendency among the playwrights towards the reading-drama. This is generally the case when the poet is nearer to the writing-table than to the stage. Action should always be considered as the fulfilment of a drama; very often the actor is the very interpreter of a dramatic work. Sprague writes on page xxv of his book on *Shakespeare and the Actors*:

The extent to which business is implied, if not actually directed, in Shakespeare's own lines seems to me striking, not to mention scene after scene, in his greater plays, which depends for its effectiveness largely upon action. Shakespeare's plays were written for performance, and surely, through performance, light has been shed on many dark places in them—often, it is my belief, by means of stage-business. "I look upon a good Player", writes the anonymous author of Letter to Miss Nossifer (London 1735, p. 13) "as the best Commentator".

Correct performance of a play must not be confounded with acting words. Sprague gives a very interesting quotation from Robert Lloyd's poem *The Actor* (1760):

*The Word and Action should conjointly suit,
But acting Words is Labour too minute.*

and explains the phrase "acting words" by an example from his enormous treasure of anecdotes:

Woodward, a contemporary of Garrick's, ... would mimic the wiping of a glass, or the drawing of a cork at the word "waiter", and would not say "mercier" till he had measured off several yards of cloth on the flap of his sleeve (p. xvi).

It is not the only function of gesture to help the audience during the moments of applause or loud laughter, or during the passages in which the actor's voice is not strong enough to fill the whole playhouse; neither has it primarily an explanatory task, as a help to the duller among the audience, those that Fielding has portrayed in the personage of Partridge. The part of gesture is of a dignity much superior to all that has been alluded to before: bodily motion only makes the theatre the *specta-culum* it is to be, the visual sensation. Without it, the drama remains literature. The writer should allow

⁵ Cf. Hamlet's: "though by your smiles you seem to say so ..."

the player to remain an actor; his text should not compel him to become a speaker. Harley Granville-Barker most energetically protests against all endeavours to separate Shakespeare from the stage, and he is right to do so: "Scholars have been able ... to divorce their Shakespeare from the theatre." (Pref. to Shakespeare I, p. ix.)

And yet!—Which was the part of his opus Shakespeare was proudest of? Was it the hundreds of thousands of minute technical details of invention, composition, and gestic handicraft? Was it his successfully balanced style, was it that admirable via media between pantomime and rhetoric? There are so and so many remarks in his plays which show that it was the element in his production that we should call the reading-drama element the Shakespeare thought most of. Shakespeare himself must have regarded the reading-drama as a higher form of literary production than the play actually produced on the stage. The extraordinary length of the Folio-Hamlet is only one proof of this.⁶ And more than once, the poet speaks of those who are not able to appreciate his poetical and philosophical points: "the ignorant" he calls them, or the "groundlings", "the vnſkilfull". And there were groundlings among the higher classes, too: Polonius is one of them. In Cor. (3. 2. 76) we read:

*for in ſuch buſineſſe
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th'ignorant
More learned than the eares ...*

Hamlet (Ham. 3. 2.) speaks of:

*The Groundlings: who (for the moſt part) are capeable
of nothing, but inexplorable dumbe ſhewes, & noiſe ...*

The following passage clearly illustrates that Shakespeare did not only distinguish between experts and know-nothings, but that the latter very often filled the whole playhouse:

*though it make the vnſkilfull laugh cannot but make the Iudicious greene; The
cenſure of the which One muſt in your allowance o'reway a whole Theater of Others
(3. 2).*

Polonius, as said above, belongs to Society and is yet uncultivated: after the player's first long speech he remarks:

This is too long.

And Hamlet grimly retorts:

*It ſhall to'th Barbars, with your beard. Prythee ſay on: He's for a Iigge, or a tale
of Baudry; or hee ſleepes. Say on ... (Ham. 2. 2.).*

There must have been many a Christopher Sly in the audience who expected a "Comontie" to be "a Chriſtmas gambold, or a tumbling trick", while the poet gives him to understand that a comedy is intended to be "more

⁶ Cf. L. L. Schücking's study on the *Problem der Überlieferung des Hamlettextes*, Leipzig, 1931.

pleasing stuffe". (Is there not a satire in the fact that the pedlar, car-maker, bear-leader, and tinker is a "lord" when he wears those lines?)

And Theseus, the mightiest of all human beings, wants to

weare away this long age of three houres,

Between our after supper, and bed-time." (M.N.D. 5.1.33-34.)

not with a play of any literary value, but with maske and dancce:

What abridgement have you for this evening?

What maske? What musicke?

How shall we beguile the lazie time? (M.N.D. 5.1.39.)

And he accepts the mechanic's play, praised for its simplicity and shortness:

some ten words long ...

But by ten words, my Lord, it is too long;

Which makes it tedious. (ib.)

"The Elizabethans", according to Joseph (p. 122), "did not distinguish as we do between acted drama, and drama read in the study." But who were the Elizabethans? Were they not a society as motley as ours, as variegated in tastes and likings as we are? And do not the quotations from Shakespeare himself plainly demonstrate how they were split up in two groups with quite different tastes? Neither can the almost two generations of Elizabethans be summarized under one label, especially if we consider the rapid development of civilization in Shakespeare's day. There were amateurs of the reading-drama among them as well as lovers of the stage type; not to speak of the considerable majority of Shakespeare's contemporaries who were interested in neither class of theatre but preferred the bear- and deer-gardens to "Hamlet" and "Julius Caesar".

It will be comparatively easy for future students of our present-day theatre to write about our stage: hundreds of thousands of photographic pictures in newspapers, periodicals, books, and films bear witness to the activity of our actors. The sources for the study of former epochs of theatrical history are very much sparser and often they are not very reliable. There are the Greek urns and a number of paintings, drawings, and engravings. They obviously demonstrate that the style of acting has changed with the general style of life; but what guarantee do they give for an exact reproduction of what had happened on the stage? It is not rare that the sketcher was an amateur, or that he drew from memory, or hurriedly during a performance like the Dutchman Jan de Witt in the 1820s in 1896. But even if an artist made the sketch, it is possible that he either accentuated the emphasis that the actor gave to his movements or that he overlooked it. The text, therefore,

⁷ A common idea in Shakespeare's day: "He (i.e. the actor) entertains us in the best leisure of our life, that is between meals, the most unfit time either for study or bodily exercise." Sir Thomas Overbury, Characters, 1614-1616 (J. Dover Wilson, *Life in Sh.'s England*, p. 223).

is the only—more or less—safe clue for research, and secure results can only be obtained from that document.

Books on gesturing and mediaeval rhetoric may be a good help and must certainly not be neglected: but if we want to know what Hemings, Pope, and others probably did, we must restrict ourselves to the canon; Bulwer's *Chironomia* can only tell us what they possibly added to the necessary stage-business demanded by the poet.

Anna Spitzbarth submitted Greek tragedy to a similar examination and came to the conclusion that the Greek dramatists chiefly counted on type-gestures (*Typengebärden*): „Während das neuzeitliche Drama es liebt, seelische Vorgänge in ihrer inneren Entwicklung möglichst wahrheitsgetreu und überzeugend darzustellen, können wir ein derartiges Bestreben in der griechischen Tragödie nicht feststellen.“ „Die exemplarische Kraft des Mythos“, as she styles it, also determines the gesticulation and gives the actor little freedom to elaborate psychological details.

Is there a best way of acting and does Shakespeare answer to that standard? What does ideal acting consist in? These are questions to which the study of drama necessarily leads. „Die Kunst des Schauspielers besteht in Sprache und Körperbewegung,“⁸ says Goethe, and we may conclude that ideal acting consists in the greatest possible amalgamation of words and gestures. But Goethe's definition is rather loose and does not further our inquiry much. What then is the touchstone for a correct evaluation of motion and text?

The art of gesturing swings from extreme symbolism to outrageous naturalism; and there is the *aurea mediocritas* of a style like Shakespeare's. But is it really "golden"? Is it not merely one of three—or possibly more—ways of carrying the same point? The fashions of painting, carving, making music, and composing words vary from country to country and from age to age; and so does the art of producing a play on the stage.

The symbolic type is the oldest type of playing and is still mingled with religious purposes: it is not an imitation of nature (or reality) but a re-creation of it; it is an idealising product of living forces. Gestures—and words—have an emanation of their own, an effluence of forces, and a magic influence on the beholder who finds himself under their spell. We find such representations everywhere and independent of the time and of the social class by or for which they are performed. The mass-priest uses them, the conjurer, the magician of the African tribe, the Bali dancer, the mediaeval performer of mysteries and miracles, but also the Greek theatre, and, most of all, the Chinese and (its near relative) the Japanese stage. In the

⁸ *Rules for Actors*. Cf. also the excellent pages in J. E. Schmidt's book on *Shakespeare's Dramen und sein Schauspielerberuf*, Berlin, 1914, p. 164 sqq.

latter two, everything adventitious and trivial is omitted. A rigid formalism replaces any naturalistic element, and the beholder of such a sacramental and formal play has to be initiated to an esoteric science of gestures and movements. Those eastern peoples, which transform every detail of household furniture into a symbol, are acquainted with symbolism from their early youth. Thus the spectator of a Chinese play knows—and accepts—the fiction that a non-existing “heavy door” is opened with “hard labour”; the actor “mounts” an invisible “horse”; a hand is raised to mark a window. And more than that: every motion of the human soul can be expressed by gestures: love, hatred, pensiveness, envy, and repentance are all indicated by certain movements of the actor’s fan.

The symbol-gesture is on a higher level than the signal-gesture. Symbols are filled with mental substance; signals are merely conventional tokens and a system of established, but hollow, movements. Folding one’s hand for prayer is symbolic, meaning that the spiritual circuit is closed in itself, and that all influence from outside is excluded, that man is in connexion with the eternal being. The guard’s waving a flag, however, is a signal without any spiritual architecture. It just expresses a will, an intention, and its form is accidental. In the symbol, form and contents are one. The symbol is essential. The sign is a documentation of personal will, while the symbol rather expresses an idea.

That a mere gesture can be of greater strength than a word, that horror can be concentrated in one gesture much more than in a long comment, can easily be exemplified: “He was — — —”, followed by a mute gesture of the forefinger across the throat, is filled with much more emotion than the bare statement: “He was hanged.”

The naturalistic type needs less exemplification than the symbolical one. The dramatic history of the nineteenth century from Longfellow to George Bernard Shaw may illustrate what I mean.

Apart from the symbolical, naturalistic, and “*via media*” types of gestures there is a fourth: we may call it the rhetorical or majestic, or swelling, or inflated type—all according to the mind of the speaker. In many cases, if not in most, it will be empty pomp, mere “sawing of the air” (Ham. 3. 2.). The actor has inherited it from the orator and, in imitation of his testator, he produces it in various shades from helplessness to grandiloquence. The hand is moved away from the breastbone in a curved motion, as if to say that the speaker gives something away from him. Roman statues often have that admirable sway; but how are we to interpret it? Is the movement of the Arringatore in the Archaeological Museum in Florence a natural gesture or one learnt in a school of rhetoric? (I should incline to the latter interpretation.) Another such gesture—which looks like the prototype of all rhetorical gestures—is found in the statue of Augustus Imperator of the Villa Prima-

porta (Vatican). The emperor raises his hand to impose silence to his soldiers. All this appears stilted—to the modern eye, at least. Grandeur has lost much of its attractiveness. And Shakespeare-Hamlet's demand for nature (Ham. 3.2.) shows how much the author was in advance of his age.

There are, at last, the individual gestic creations: they cannot be classified, as they either arise, like gestic day-flies, out of the peculiar situation, or belong to the repertoire of one character only. They all serve to corroborate certain words of the actor or speaker. If a teacher or lecturer wants to give a very difficult explanation which makes him struggle with words himself, he often looks fixedly in one direction and, as if he actually saw the desired word or idea in space, somewhere in the air, he makes a gesture with both hands as if he wanted to capture it by hemming it in on all sides. We do not mean to explain any such gestures—we simply state their existence and the fact that they are not, or very rarely, laid down in the text.

2. POET, PLAYER, AND STAGE MANAGER

We have seen in the preceding chapter that there are two types of dramatic texts: one that only contains the idea that the author wants to convey to his reader or spectator; and one that moreover stirs our gestic imagination by means of textuary stage-directions.

The second type of plays gives precious advice to the actor: the author uses his word to make the player act, not only speak.

If Shakespeare wants Burbage to touch his sword at a certain passage of a certain play, he can simply tell him to do so during a rehearsal; if he wants to influence future actors, the only medium of transmitting his vision of the scene is the text, the vehicle of thought being either the stage-direction or the text itself. The more the dramatist thinks or writes in actions, the better—the less he does so, the worse for those who are to stage his play in future times.

In the daily intercourse with his actors, Shakespeare must have instructed them; just as Goethe, Bernard Shaw, and others corrected their players' diction and gesticulation. Shakespeare left us no written rules for the actors of his theatre; the lack is compensated by the second scene of the third act of Hamlet. The passage undoubtedly contains Shakespeare's own conception of the theatre, and it is divided into three parts by its contents as well as by its external form—the latter division is effectuated by the interrupting lines of the player. The first part is a polemic against over-acting, the second exhorts the player to simplicity and conformity to nature, and the last deals with the off-hand addresses of the clowns. The first part of the middle passage, which is omitted in Q_1 , is aesthetics at its best. After his invective

against the periwig-pated fellows, Hamlet continues: "Be not too tame neyther: but let your owne Discretion be your Tutor. Sute the Action to the Word, the Word to the Action, with this speciall obseruance: that you ore-*step*⁹ not the mode*stie* of Nature: for anything so ore-done is frō the purpose of Playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the Mirrour vp to Nature ...". Two points are demanded here and they will be shortly discussed on the following pages:

- a) to suit the action to the word (i.e. the gesture to the text);
- b) to show an artless manner and to keep to what is regarded as "nature" in acting.

Perfect equilibrium of action and word is the first demand. Action without word is nothing but pantomime, "inexplicable dumbe showes, and noyse", as Shakespeare calls it shortly before; dumb-show, however, is the very diet for the nutcracking groundlings in the pit. If we want to illustrate the preponderance of the word over the action, we shall find examples in the rhetorical tragedy of Marlowe and in the early tragedies of Shakespeare himself.¹⁰ In his later works, the poet tries to find a compromise; he seeks it as a poet by projecting the gestures into the word, and he must have made the same attempt as a stage-manager by exhorting his actors.

In his monograph on *Shakespeare und der Tragödienstil seiner Zeit* L.L.Schücking shows that the theatrical style of the Elizabethans was extremely vehement, which is true for the baroque age in general. The extravagance of gesticulation seems to have been encouraged by the audience, practised by the actors, and planned by the poet. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, for instance, furthers such intensification and progress to wild gesturing in every imaginable way. Besides, we must not neglect the fact that the acting style in London and the quality of the actors must have greatly improved within about fifty years. But Shakespeare still had known people whose behaviour provoked a comparison with the "town-Cryer" (Ham. 3.2). "Sawing of the air" is especially what Shakespeare criticises, as on the whole Shakespeare seems to have been much more pestered by visual transgressions than by bad diction. In Qq_{1,2} we find:

ô it offends mee to the soule, to heare a robusfious periwig-pated fellowe tere a passion to totters ...

F₁ corrects "heare" into "see". It is the bad spectacle that offends the author more than anything else, which may have made him alter his MS later. Particularly in Marlowe's plays the adaptation of the action to the word must have produced immoderate acting. The long-winded monologues and dialogues required a synchronous employment of the player, and it is evident

⁹ -*step*] F₁ -*stop*; Qq -*steppe*.

¹⁰ e.g. Titus; 1-3 H. VI; R. III, especially the passage 4.4.292: "Look, what is done".

that such noisy, ranting speeches, which challenged men, heaven, and the gods, had to be accompanied by similar gesticulation. With Shakespeare, everything was much subtler; he knows the "whirle-winde of Passion" too, but as a cultured man he requires "Smoothnesse" and "Temperance" even in those utterances. Shakespeare, after a serious struggle, had found his own artistic means, lying between Euphuism and braggadocio: he had worked out a moderate and yet powerful language peculiar to himself; and he was certainly entitled to ask that his actors should accommodate themselves to it. He once more shows the old type of actor and play in Ham. 2. 2. 48 ff., but he clearly proves them to be antiquated. He has higher aims than to "split the eares of the Groundlings" or "to make the vnskilfull laugh". He wants "to hold as 'twere the Mirrour vp to nature". But what was Shakespeare's conception of nature? "The modestie of nature" must not be transcended. This seems to have been Goethe's view of Shakespeare (*Zum Schakespears Tag*, October 14, 1771): „Natur! Natur! nichts so Natur als Schäckespears Menschen.“ Goethe and his age supposed Shakespeare to have been without plan, just as if nature had worked organically in him; but a careful examination of his works clearly reveals the wise structure and economy of his plays. The Englishman was regarded as amorphous because the crystalline form does not appear so distinctly as in Racine or Corneille. Herder seems to be nearer the truth when he calls him an "interpreter of nature" („Dolmetscher der Natur“).¹¹ Shakespeare avoids intemperance, and at the same time he defends himself against the other extreme: "be not too tame neyther." His theatre has nothing to do with the far-eastern type of acting, in which a broil is reduced to a touch of two fingers, nor with the declamatory drama of the French, in which all tension remains inward, and which can best be paraphrased by two lines from Corneille's *Polyeucte* (written twenty-seven years after Shakespeare's death!).

Et quoique le dehors soit sans émotion,

Le dedans n'est que trouble et que sédition.

In the last chapter of his book on Elizabethan Acting, B.L. Joseph deals with Hamlet's speech to the actors. He almost convinces us that "natural", in Shakespeare's day, meant, according to the rules of rhetoric, an assertion that he proves with a great number of quotations from the Shakespearean and post-Shakespearean ages. And yet there is a gap in his demonstration; on p. 15 he says:

"Yet, it may be argued, there are passages in Shakespeare which strike us as too realistic for the rhetorical style of acting. Was the performance of these rhetorical? No certain answer can be given. It is obvious that the style must have varied not only from theatre to theatre but also according to the

¹¹ Shakespeare in *Von Deutscher Art und Kunst*, 1773.

needs of individual scenes. Nevertheless, the fact that a scene strikes us as realistic today does not mean that the style of its first performance was necessarily realistic in the realism of today."

Thus Joseph's argument is richly exemplified and paraphrased, but not proved. Shakespeare's use of the word "nature" is still unexplained. The only thing that we can say is that Shakespeare, in this as in many other regards, cannot be measured by other, and less eminent, spirits of his age. A king is—or at least was—the lawgiver; he makes the law, without being subject to every item of it, if he can find a better way of behaving. We cannot judge Shakespeare by the practice of his contemporaries; in so many questions of vocabulary, style, thinking, philosophy, and ethics he astonishes us—why should he strictly respect the laws of stage-acting and of planning stage-acting in his texts? Shakespeare cannot be measured by the pedantries of rhetoric, though he certainly accepted much of it. "Friends, Romans, Countrymen ..." (J.C. 3.2.80) may have been accompanied by prescribed movements; even, "Gallop apace, you fiery footed steeds" (R. & J. 3.2):—but what shall we say of a passage like W.T. 1.2.123: "Come Captaine, we must be neat."? Can this be accompanied by rhetorical accessory?

If we go through Shakespeare's works to see what importance Shakespeare gives to the word rhetoric, we shall find that in seven quotations it occurs only twice in a positive sense ("heavenly rhetoric of thine eyes", *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 29 and in L.L.L. 4.3.60). The other six times he speaks either mockingly or contemptuously of rhetoric (Sonnets, 82, 10; L.L.L. 2.229; ib. 3.64; ib. 4.3.239; ib. 5.1.45; *Taming* 1.1.35).

In the first three passages we hear him speak of the "[t]rained touches of rhetoric", the "Sweete smoke of Rhetorike", and Berowne exclaims against it "Fie, painted Rethoricke ...".

This may give a hint of what Shakespeare's real opinion of Quintilian's trade was. But the much safer evidence of his independence of rhetorical peculiarities was his genius and his originality, at least in his greater and later works. There is no doubt that much of what was rhetorical and conventional flowed into his work. But the great majority of his conceptions certainly proceeded from actual observation of life. Quite a number of his gestic observations give proof that he must have had the eye of a naturalist and not only the careful memory of a medieval or Renaissance rhetorician; it was very often a gesture, a germinal action, that gave him occasion for a whole scene or even a play. Those germinal gestures may be a kiss, a movement of the hand, or whatsoever else. They are sometimes repeated throughout a whole play and form a kind of leitmotif.

True to the advice that he gave to his actors—to suit the action to the word—he in advance suited the text to what he wanted the actor to do.

Very often we learn in a prognostic speech what is going to happen a few lines, scenes, or acts later; sometimes we hear of it only when the action itself has been done long since; and in many cases again, the actor gets "stage-directions" hidden in the text itself. He acts and speaks about his action simultaneously: this is what we may call the textuary stage-direction.

Typical examples of such textuary stage-directions (text-directions) are the passages in J. C. 2. 1, and Antony's words in the same play (3. 1. 186).

Brut.: *Know I these men, that come along with you? ...*

Caß.: *Yes, every man of them; ...*

This is Trebonius.

Brut.: *He is welcome hither.*

Caß.: *This, Decius Brutus.*

Brut.: *He is welcome too.*

Caß.: *This, Caska; this Cinna; and this Metellus Cymbel.*

and:

Let each man render me his bloody hand.

First Marcus Brutus will I shake with you;

Next Caius Cassius do I take your hand;

Now Decius Brutus yours; now yours Metellus;

Yours Cinna; and my valiant Caska, yours;

Though last, not least in love, yours good Trebonius, (J. C. 3. 1. 186)

which we may thus translate into prose: "Antony shakes hands with all of them", which would be a regular stage-direction. Shaw, or the author of a film script, would further add a detailed list of the personages in the order of their welcome.

There exists an analogous case in the same play (3. 2), when Caesar's "Mantle" is shown to the people, and again Antony is the speaker. Did the Antony-performer at the Globe need such mnemonic help?

Ant.: *If you have teares, prepare to shed them now.*

You all do know this Mantle, I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on,

'Twas on a Summers Evening in his Tent,

That day he overcame the Neruy.

Looke, in this place ran Cassius Dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Caska made:

Through this the wel-beloued Brutus stabb'd,

And as he pluck'd his cursed Steele away:

Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it, ... (J. C. 3. 2).

In A. & C. 4. 2. the text direction is even preciser than the stage-direction:

Ant : *Well said, come on:*

Ca' forth my Household Seruants, lets to-night

Enter. 3 or 4 Seruitors

*Be bounteous at our Meale. Giue me thy hand,
Thou hast bin rightly honest, fo hast thou;
Thou, and thou, and thou ...*

and in line 15:

And thou art honest too: ...

We are convinced that the stage-direction cannot be Shakespeare's. The poet needed a definite number of people to make his lines true; but the editors, the prompter, the compositor, or whoever it was, did not think of this, and so wrote "three or four", instead of the exact number of six.

The courteous behaviour of two gentlemen of perfect urbanity is cleverly caricatured with but a few words:

Cae.: *Welcome to Rome.*

Ant.: *Thanke you.*

Cae.: *Sit.*

Ant.: *Sit fir.*

Cae.: *Nay then* (A. & C. 2.2.28)

No actor will fail to perform this little incident with gusto.

If an actor has to greet others, he generally shakes hands with them separately, but he never fails to give them all a general summarizing welcome at the last. In the conspirators' scene (J.C. 2.1) Brutus repeats his general welcome with the words: "They are all welcome." Later on in the play Antony (3.1) finishes his handshaking with the remark:

... yours good Trebonius

Gentlemen all: Alas, what shall I say ...

After having received some of the players, Hamlet addresses them as a whole:

Masters, you are all welcome. (Ham. 2.2)

Or look at Antony's speech (A. & C. 4.2):

Thou, and thou, and thou: you haue seru'd me well ...

To Rosencrantz and Guildensterne, Hamlet says:

How do'st thou Guildensterne? Oh, Rosencrantz; good Lads:

How doe ye both? (Ham. 2.2)

In Temp. (5.125), after having embraced Alonso and Gonzalo, Prospero speaks to all the courtiers:

Wellcome, my friends all ...

In Cor. (2.1.200 sq.) we find:

Volum.: *I knowe not where to turne.*

Oh welcome home: and welcome Generall,

And y'are welcome all.

May we suppose that this was Shakespeare's own gestic habit? Or is it simply a prescription of medieval rhetoric, or a peculiarity of Renaissance etiquette? And what gesture was it? A movement of the speaker's hand was certainly connected with such words as "you ... all".

To explain the degree of intimacy between himself and Ferdinand, Braggart (i. e. Armado) declares that

*it will please his Grace (by the world) sometime to leane vpon my poore shoulder,
and with his royall finger thus dallie with my excrement, with my mustachio*
(L. L. L. 5. 1. 104).

The passage shows that Armado plays with his own—or another's—moustache, and that he possibly leans on the shoulder of a fellow actor. We cannot, of course, make out what Shakespeare's Armado actually did. There are two possibilities: he either plays with his own moustache or leans on his partner's shoulder and plays with the beard of the latter. And again: what is a "mustachio" exactly? Schmidt (Lex. II) has no form "moustache". The only passage in which Shakespeare has the word "mustachio" is the one in L. L. L. (5. 1). The Shakespeare-Lexicon paraphrases "mustachio" with "hair on the lip". On the other hand: mustachio is in the singular and Schlegel translates in the following way:

und mit ihren königlichen Fingern so zu tändeln mit meinem Auswuchs, meinem Knebelbart,

thus possibly a beard on the chin; this interpretation produces a different movement of the hand. There is even a last problem: is this gesture mere fun, or does Shakespeare mean to caricature an acquaintance of his, possibly a courtier?

The stage-direction need not be contained in the player's own words, it may be given by the partner as well. Like a mirror, the words of the actor B reflect the doings of A (reflecting stage-direction). Hamlet e. g. records a sudden smile of the two others (Ham. 2. 2. 330):

Man delights not me; no, nor Woman neither; though by your smiling you seeme to say so.

Or a similar case from All's Well (1. 3. 148):

*Nay a mother, why not a mother? when I fed a mother
Me thought you saw a serpent, what's in mother,
That you start at it?*

Brutus' gesture is reflected in Caska's remark:

You pul'd me by the cloake (J. C. 1. 2).

Two lines earlier, Caesar says to Antony:

Come on my right hand, for this eare is deafe ...

In the C. of E. (2. 2. 176), Adriana clings to her husband with the words:

Come I will fasten on this sleeue of thine

by which she comments upon her movement of fastening as upon his raising his arm.

"So to the Lawes at large I write my name", says Berowne (L. L. L. 1. 1. 154) when he signs the fateful contract. And this is yet a very simple way of directing the stage, if we compare it to Holofernes' words in 4. 2. 104;

Nathaniel reads the letter that Jacquenetta has given to him, while Holofernes goes up and down, quoting: "Fauste¹² precor gellida, quando pecas omne¹³ sub vmbra ruminat &c." After a little while, he grows impatient and, looking over Sir Nathaniel's shoulder, he asks: "Vnder pardon, fir, what are the contents? or rather as Horace says in his, What my foule verses." After the anacoluthon "in his" he suddenly exclaims "What ... &c."

When going through the streets of London, Shakespeare must have been a keen observer of other people's gait. And again and again he makes use of his observations in his dramas (T. & C. 4. 5. 14; J. C. 1. 3. 132; Oth. 5. 1. 23; Temp. 4. 102). The most astonishing gestic direction concerning a person's gait is the one in *Much Ado*:

For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs

Close by the ground. (3. 1. 27)

J. E. Harting, *Ornithology of Shakespeare*, London 1871 (quoted by the Furness Variorum editor), writes: "Like the partridge and some other birds, it (i. e. the lapwing) has a curious habit of trying to draw intruders away from its nest or young by fluttering along the ground in an opposite direction, or by feigning lameness, or uttering melancholy cries at a distance." And another—anonymous—author, quoted by the same editor, writes in a book *Shakespeare's Garden of Girls* (London, 1885) that "she accurately describes the lapwing's flight".

If we consider what Beatrice is about to do, we must come to the conclusion that both authors are wrong. She has heard the news of Ursula's and Hero's conversation in the "pleached bower" and hurries to overhear the two. As she wants to be unseen while she approaches them, she has to be very careful and she will certainly neither "flutter in the opposite direction" (Harting) nor "utter melancholy cries" (ib.). The lapwing does so in order to draw intruders away from its nest by attracting their attention. As to the anonymous writer's allusion to the flight of the lapwing, I find the following passage in Brehm's *Tierleben*, the German standard reference book on zoology: „Man kann das treffend einen Gaukelflug (fluttering flight) nennen und ihn mit dem Flug mancher Schmetterlinge (the flight of butterflies) vergleichen.“

In the book mentioned above (*Der kleine Brehm*, bearbeitet von Dr. Walther Kahle, 1933, p. 334) we, however, find a quotation from another naturalist, Liebe: „Geht der Kiebitz nach Nahrung aus, so läuft er mit ruhig gehaltenem Körper schnellen Schritts etwa 1 m weit geradeaus, hält dann mit einem Ruck ganz still, indem er auf einem Ständer (a huntsmen's term for a bird's leg) steht und den andern nach hinten gestreckt auf die Zehenspitzen

¹² Fauste] F1 facile. ¹³ omne] F1 omnia.

stützt, und unterzieht, ohne den Kopf zu bewegen, den kleinen Fleck Landes um sich her der sorgfältigsten Prüfung ... &c. Nachdem er die Stelle abgäugt hat, rennt er wieder mit grösster Gewandtheit über Stellen und Grasstubben weg 1 m weit vor und bleibt wiederum in der angegebenen Stellung stehen, und so fort.“

Whoever has seen a person approaching stealthily another person to play the spy, will recognize each of the movements described by Liebe. And how shall we explain “close by the ground”? Flight being the ordinary way of locomotion of a bird, the poet simply wanted to emphasize that he was speaking of the gait of the bird when it is in search of food. In more than one place, Shakespeare proves a great observer of nature, and he was never at a loss for a metaphor when he needed one.

In T. & C., Cressida is compared to another bird:

Pand.: *Shee's making her ready, sheele come straight; you must be witty now, she does blush, & fetches her winde so short, as if she were fraid with a sprite: ... she fetches her breath so short as a new tane Sparrow* (T. & C. 3.2. 34).

Shakespeare's skill in making his players act consists in implying every action in his words. If the poet compares the pretty Cressida to a sparrow and Beatrice's gait with that of a lapwing, he represents Falstaff's bulkiness (2 H. IV 1.2. 13) with the words, “I doe heere walke before thee, like a Sow, that hath o'rewhelm'd all her Litter, but one”.

An advice to the actor is often introduced by the words “how like a ...”, and in many cases it actually is advice. There are, however, exceptions, and Shylock's aside “how like a fawning publican he looks” (M. of V. 1.3.42) must be a riddle to a careful player. What does “fawning publican” exactly mean in this passage? The Jews were certainly accustomed to the phrase *τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοί*, and attributed to the publicans any bad quality as e.g. fawning. The Old Testament never uses the Shylockean phrase, and in the New Testament only the four Gospels speak of the publicans. Thus the combination of “fawning” with “publican” must be Shylock's. But what is Antonio—the “fawning publican”—supposed to do on the stage to arouse Shylock's suspicion? Does he look at him or does he take no notice of him? Is there the slightest movement about him that might be interpreted as “fawning”? But we must consider that Shylock is—justly—prejudiced against Antonio and may see gestures that do not exist in reality. I am almost certain that the merchant's behaviour is to be contrasted with the Jew's interpretation. The spectator is to be surprised by the apparent discrepancy between Shylock's words and the simple, frank, and self-possessed deportment of the Venetian.

Another example of textuary stage-direction is to be found in many cases in which the word “thus” accompanies the action. This case must be spoken of in the chapter on deictic gestures.

The poet, the player, and the stage-manager seem to be one in Shakespeare's person. As a poet, and in his visionary power, he creates the images of scenes that he wants to write; as a player, he sees the possibility of their realization on the stage; and as a producer, he tries to imply the action in the word. If anything can convince us of Shakespeare's having been an actor it is certainly the text of his works, the care and originality with which he prepares his text for the stage; and not with stage-directions merely, but by the very text of the play.

Let us compare a passage from another author to a similar text in Shakespeare. I take the example at random from Marivaux (*La double incons-tance*, 1723):

Le prince sous le nom d'officier du palais et Lisette sous le nom de dame de la cour, et les acteurs précédents.

(Le prince en voyant Silvia, salue avec beaucoup de soumission.)

Silvia: *Comment ! vous voilà, Monsieur ? Vous saviez donc que j'étais ici ?*

Le prince: *Oui, Mademoiselle, je le savais ; mais vous m'aviez dit de ne plus vous voir, et je n'aurais osé paraître sans Madame, qui a souhaité que je l'accompagne, et qui a obtenu du prince l'honneur de vous faire la révérence.*

(La dame ne dit mot, et regarde seulement Silvia avec attention. Flaminia et elle se font des mines.)

We do not only learn from the stage-directions that the Prince greets her, but how and when, i.e. after having noticed her. The different ways of facial expression are all contained in the stage-direction; the text itself is absolutely bare of action.

The very contrary of this can be found in a similar passage of Shakespeare's (*Ham.* 3.4). When the ghost of Hamlet's father enters during the "closet-scene", young Hamlet speaks:

Ham.: *Save me; and houer o're me with your wings* 1
You beauenly Guards. What would you¹⁴ gracious figure?

Qu.: *Alas he's mad.* 2

Ham.: *Do you not come your tardy Sonne to chide,*
That laps't in Time and Passion, lets go by
Th'important acting of your dread command? Oh say.

Ghost: *Do not forget: this Visitation*
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

But looke, Amazement on thy Mother sits;
O step betweene her, and her fighting Soule,
Conceit in weakest bodies, strongest workes.

Speake to her Hamlet. 3

¹⁴ you] Fi: you, all the later editors: your. Flatter translates: Was willst du, selig Bildnis?

Ham.: *How is it with you Lady?*
 Qu.: *Alas how is't with you?*
That you bend your eye on vacancie, 4
And with their corporall ayre do bold discourse.
Forth at your eyes, your spirits wildeley peepe,
And as the sleeping Souldiours in th' Alarme,
Your bedded haire, like life in excrements,
Start vp, and stand an end. Oh gentle Sonne,
Vpon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle coole patience. Whereon do you looke? 5
 Ham.: *On him, on him: look you how pale he glares,* 6
His forme and cause conioyn'd, preaching to stones,
Would made them capeable. Do not looke vpon me, 7
... (3 lines) ...
 Qu.: *To who do you speake this?* 8
 Ham.: *Do you see nothing there?*
 Qu.: *Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.*
 Ham.: *Nor did you nothing heare?*
 Qu.: *No nothing but our felues.*
 Ham.: *Why look you there: looke how it steals away:*
My Father in his habite, as he liued,
Looke where he goes euen now out at the Portall. Exit.

Out of the text-directions we may distil this running commentary: 1) A gesture of defense or horror. 2) Movement of despair. 3) Hamlet turns to his mother. 4) The queen refers to the conversation between Hamlet and his father. 5) The queen describes Hamlet. 6) Hamlet points at the ghost; description of the ghost. 7) Gesture of horror. (Cf. R.Flatter, *Hamlet's Father*; Sir Laurence Olivier is there shown in the Closet Scene, illustration between pp.94 and 95.) 8) They both look in the same direction.

Hamlet's, the Queen's, and the Ghost's demeanour are all indicated by means of mutual description; there is not one stage-direction in about thirty lines of passionate acting! Hamlet describes the Ghost to his mother, she portrays her son to himself, and the Ghost speaks to Hamlet about his mother.

3. ACTION AND STAGE-PROPERTY

Action and word are one contrast, but there is yet another: the one of actions and things; and as Shakespeare is a master of contrasts, he does not neglect this means of expression. He uses stage-property in a very subtle way and with an extreme mastery. Whether it be a crown or a sword, a book or a map: any accessory which appears on the stage has its definite function, and

very often it stands as a symbol expressing an idea, a feeling, or an intention of the person. In many cases, the actor is given clear advice as to the way in which he is to handle one or the other object.

In R.II, the King's crown is the medium for such a symbolic act:

Rich.: *Giue me the Crowne. Here Cousin, seize ye Crowne:*

Here Cousin, on this side my Hand, on that side thine.

As far as this, the scene is merely a textuary stage-direction. But it soon becomes more, it changes into a symbol:

Now is this Golden Crowne like a deepe Well,

That owes two Buckets, filling one another,

The emptier euer dancing in the ayre,

The other downe, vnseene, and full of Water:

That Bucket downe, and full of Teares am I,

Drinking my Griefes, whil'st you mount vp on high (4. I. 130).

If we examine the actions suggested by those lines, the problem becomes more difficult:

a) What does "this side" mean and what "that side"?

b) Does Richard kneel, when he offers the crown to his successor, or does he hold it on the flat of his hand?

The gestic symbolism is, obviously, not carried through; in any case it is highly brain-twisting. Even if we accept the image of the draw-well: why should one bucket fill the other? Possibly Richard merely holds the crown on his hands, palms upwards. In line 204, however, he says that he gives it from off his head. The hands evidently do not correspond to the two buckets. For when Bolingbroke's hands seize the crown, and with it some of the cares of royalty, the bucket would be full and consequently go down (Bolingbroke: Part of your Cares you giue me with your Crowne).

The words of this speech simply do not suit any reasonable action, and members of the wellsinkers' craft will continue to wonder why one bucket should fill the other. The only possible explanation of the passage is the psychological one: The words are pronounced by a mind in despair, which makes them work all the same; Richard is mad with grief, and his words come out of the twilight of a troubled mind.

Soon after, his madness becomes more manifest in the drastic episode with the mirror. Richard asks for a mirror:

1 *Giue me that Glasse, and therein will I reade.*

2 *No deeper wrinkles yet? hath Sorrow strucke*

3 *So many Blowes vpon this Face of mine,*

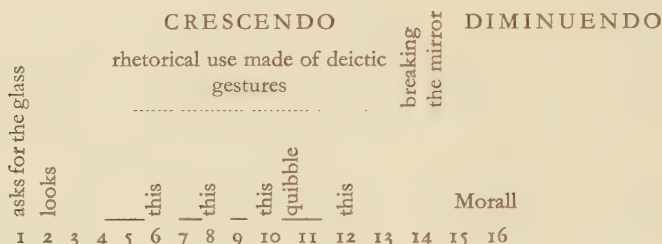
4 *And made no deeper Wounds? Oh flat^rring Glasse,*

5 *Like to my followers in prosperitie,*

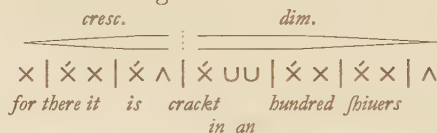
6 *Thou do'st beguile me. Was this Face, the Face*

7 *That euery day, vnder his House-hold Roofe,*

- 8 *Did keepe ten thousand men? Was this the Face,*
 9 *That like the Sunne, did make beholders winke?*
 10 *Is this the Face, which fac'd so many follyes,*
 11 *That was at last out-fac'd by Bullingbrooke?*
 12 *A brittle Glory shineth in this Face,*
 13 *As brittle as the Glory, is the Face,*
 14 *For there it is, crackt in an hundred shiuers.*
 15 *Marke silent King, the Morall of this sport,*
 16 *How soone my Sorrow hath destroy'd my Face* (R. II 4. 1. 278).



In line 14 we find the following metre:



We have in these lines one of those metrical gaps which Shakespeare so often makes use of, and of which I shall have to speak in a chapter on metrical phenomena. During the interval, the speaker smashes the mirror. This is not only an action of greatest violence, but also a symbolic gesture; Richard's personality (represented by the mirror) is shaken and scattered: "how soone my Sorrow hath destroy'd my Face". In Jean Paul's *Titan*¹⁵ and Wilde's *Dorian Gray* we have literary parallels to this.

A similar case of gestic symbolism is the passage in Ham. 3. 2. 364. The scene is a little fable, followed by the moral of the story (cf. "Marke silent King, the Morall of this sport"). In this case, the moral is introduced by "why look you now". It is highly comical to see how Hamlet four times tries to urge his instrument upon Guildensterne, who refuses it with airs and graces.

Ham.: *Will you play vpon this Pipe?*

Guild.: *My Lord, I cannot.*

Ham.: *I pray you.*

¹⁵ Jean Paul, *Der Titan*, 1800-1803, in which Schoppe, by breaking the looking-glass, destroys himself.

Guild.: *Beleeue me, I cannot.*

Ham.: *I do beseech you.*

Guild.: *I know no touch of it, my Lord.*

Ham.: *It is as easie as lying: gouerne these Ventiges with your finger and thumbe, gine it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most excellent Musicke. Looke you, these are the stoppes.*

Guild.: *But these cannot I command to any vtterance of hermony, I haue not the skill.*

Hamlet then shows him the touches, possibly by playing a little tune on the instrument: "Looke you, these are the stoppes." Now, if this small intermezzo were omitted, the understanding of the whole play would not suffer very much; there follows that scene between Hamlet and Polonius (the Camell, the Weazell, and the Whale) which seems to be no more than a gag itself—at first sight. If we look closer, we realize that Wilson Knight's remark is more than justified: that every little item of a Shakespearean play can only be rightly interpreted if we consider what it is meant to be in the whole structure of the play. If we drop the two interludes, the sudden start of the king (with Hamlet's triumphant "For if the King likes not the Comedie, / Why then belike he likes it not perdie") will knock against the gloomy exclamation "'Tis now the verie witching time ..." and Claudius's prayer; the poet obviously tries to avoid this by his scenic stratagem. Instead of the hiatus of "For if the king ...": "Witching time ... prayer of Claudius" (˘:˘), we get the more graceful arrangement of "Hamlet's Triumph"—"Recorder"—"Clouds"—"Claudius's Prayer" (˘ UU ˘), the two lighter accents countervailing one of the main stresses, ˘ = UU.

There is a similar example of perfect mastery in dramatical construction: the fourth act of J. C.. Again the spectator is held in suspense by means of loosening the compactness of the dramatic evolution of the play.

The act (sc. 1) begins with the uncanny silence of the proscription scene. Only very few gestures impress the spectator's mind, but these, though perfectly prosaic, are fraught with mischief: "Pricke him downe ...", "looke, with a spot I dam him". The most important thing, human life, is thus lightly dispatched by the movement of a pen; or were the names perforated by piercing them with some sharp instrument?

Scene two shows the other face of history: soldiers marching and resting by order of their commanders. In this passage, man is considered as mass and instrument. The third scene of act four is split up into nine phases; their symmetry crystallizes around the axis of phase four:

- Phase 1 opens the third scene with the quarrel between Cassius and Brutus. Cassius finally bares his breast to the dagger of his adversary.
- 2 shows the reconciliation. The poet appears. In phase
- 3 Brutus discloses Portia's death to his friend. Then the tapers are brought for phase

- 4 the wine-party. This and the following three phases profit of the cosy atmosphere created by these lights. There follows phase
- 5 the political discussion with again a total absence of gestures.
- 6 The moving farewell of Brutus and Cassius.
- 7 Brutus reads in his book. The boy plays on his instrument.
- 8 Caesar's ghost reminds Brutus and the spectators of the finale which is still to come in the fifth act of the tragedy. The tumult of the
- 9th phase leads to the turmoil of the hero's last battle.

The framework of this third scene is full of correspondences. On either side of the sacramental quiet of phase four we find two phases of ungestic nature, three and five. The reconciliation in two is counterbalanced by the gestures of six. And while phase one had been quite negative in its gesturing, seven is perfectly positive: its familiarity and cosiness form a last resting-place in the tragedy. Eight and nine are the dismal forebodings of what will happen in the last act.

The idyll in the tent is the last incident in the region of living human creatures; then follows the horrible downfall into the realm of death. The sweet light of the taper gives the very gestures a certain smoothness. "Lucius my Gowne ..." Brutus asks for his coat; there is no dramatic necessity for this, but a theatrical one. He shivers with cold—it is a night in a tent—thrusts his hand into his pocket, and discovers the book that he had such a long time been looking for. Highly delighted, he shows it to the boy: "Look Lucius, heere's the book I sought for so ..." The boy then plays on his instrument (a lute—Edw. J. Dent, *Sb. and Music*, in Harrison-Granville-Barker, p. 144), and when he has fallen asleep, Brutus carefully takes the instrument from him for fear that he might break it in his sleep.

It strikes us that the same Brutus who will fall upon his sword the next day should be so careful with things. The gesture of caution with which he protects the fragile instrument shows a last touch of affection for things created by man. Then Brutus sits down to turn over the leaves of his philosopher.

Let me see, let me see; is not the leafe turn'd downe

Where I left reading? Heere it is I thinke.

The ghost appears—the comfortable atmosphere changes into one of pious awe; the presence of the supernatural transforms even the gesticulation of the actor. Shakespeare uses the same principle as in the preceding example: scenes of highest dramatic tension—the whirlwind of passion!—are interrupted by others in which things of simple everyday-life prevail, making us feel at home and in safety.

The whole complexity of scenes just described has its counterpart in the same play, viz. when Caesar, before he goes to his death, asks for his gown and drinks wine with his friends.

Although Shakespeare seems to have known the tricks of several trades and the how-to-do-it of all kinds of technical processes, he certainly did not know how armour is put on. Or have we here reached the limits of textuary stage directing? Was it simply too difficult to formulate and did he prefer oral directions during the rehearsals?¹⁶ What Macbeth and Antony say to their servants when the armour is put on, are mere generalities. Shakespeare's implied stage-directions may be wonderfully exact—in those two cases they are strangely nebulous. It seems strange that Professor Sprague should have written the following lines: "Macbeth is being armed, in the third (sc. scene), and the lines themselves vividly reflect (!) the process, just as they do (!) in the later and perhaps greater arming scene in A. & C. (4. 4)."

In Macbeth's behaviour we can especially notice his nervous impatience. Delius interprets the words, "Pull't off I fay" as an address to Seyton, who tries in vain to loosen one or the other strap of Macbeth's armour: Seyton is ordered to tear it off. There is certainly a gesture behind Macbeth's words. But it is difficult to say whether it is actually the one that Delius thinks of.

A few lines after this (5. 3. 58), another obstacle arises. Macbeth calls out to his servant, who is just leaving the room: "Bring it after me ...". Schiller, who probably did not understand the remark either, gives an entirely new aspect:

Arzt: *Ja, mein Gebieter, Eure kriegेरischen Anstalten machen, dass wir davon (i.e. about the English army) hören.*

Macbeth: *Lasst sie heranziehen (= bring after me). Mich erschreckt kein Feind.*
Schlegel adds an interpretation in the shape of a stage-direction:

Doktor: *Ja,*

Mein Fürst. Eu'r königliches Rüsten, Majestät,

Macht, dass wir etwas hören.

Macbeth (zu Seyton, der ihm den Schild reichen will):

Bring' mir nach.

Bei Sterben bleib' ich und Verderben kalt.

The English texts keep silence.

Again and again, inanimate objects become dramatically important in the general economy of a play. The witches play with a pilot's thumb (1. 3. Mac., perhaps a spurious scene), they fill the kettle with a collection of most disgusting things. In the latter case, we cannot make out with certainty if

¹⁶ From Prof. J. Dieffenbacher, *Deutsches Leben im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2, p. 65 f., we learn that the knights lay down on the ground and stuck their legs into the air, after which their esquires put the armour on—which, of course, does not make a very attractive scene for the stage.

the mad hurly-burly of the song is in all its parts accompanied by respective actions, if the dancing witches always throw into the kettle the things they speak of.

But even everyday trivialities are made use of; Bianca's garter, with which Cassio's wound is provisionally dressed, is a piece of stage-property quite impossible in a French dramatist. The actor first tears off a bit of his shirt-sleeve, then he fastens it with the garter.

Viola's purse is used to show her readiness to help. While she speaks, she opens it and produces some of her money. The metrical structure of the passage permits us to point out the very place at which she begins to carry out her resolution (*Tw. N.* 3.4.377).

Ant.: *I must entreat of you some of that money.*

Vio.: *What money sir?*

This line is not complete; nor is it a continuation of the preceding one. She stops and takes the purse (hanging at her belt) and begins to count the contents. Instead of making her count, the poet has her speak the five following lines. The words, "Hold, there's halfe my Coffer", finish the scene. She offers the coins to Sebastian. And when the latter continues, "Will you deny me now?", there is again a hiatus, the verse is again broken. Sebastian does not simply continue Viola's line; his gesture of surprise is expressed by the discontinuity of the metric scheme begun in "Hold ... Coffer".

One of the *adiaphora* of the stage is the action of cutting the laces when a person swoons, or of unbuttoning¹⁷ on retiring to rest, and it is astonishing to see how delicately mingled the different artistic means may be: trivialities are carefully mixed up with discussions on love, matrimony, fidelity, and death; things of daily usage, such as pins and sheets, are thought of and confronted with immortal ideas; "the unseen is proved by the seen" and both are closely interwoven as the warp and woof of the drama. It will be shown that the interpretation of these gestic allusions may be rather difficult.

Aem.: *Dismiss me?*

Def.: *It was his bidding: therefore good Aemilia,*

Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.

We must not now displease him.

Aem.: *I, would you had neuer seene him.*

Def.: *So would not I: my loue doth so approue him,*

That euen his stubbornesse, his checks, his frownes,

(Prytbee, vn-pin me) haue grace and fauour.*

Aem.: *I haue laid those Sheetes you bad me on the bed. (Oth. 4. 3. 15)*

¹⁷ Unbuttoning of the clothes frequently occurs in Shakespeare's works: twice in *Lear* (3.4; 5.3), once in *A. & C.* (1.3) and in *W. T.* (3.2).

(* 'The very confession of Desdemona's boundless love of Othello is interrupted by the order to "vn-pin".')

Des.: *All's one: good Father, how foolish are our minds?*

If I do die before, prythee shrow'd me

In one of these same Sheetes.

Aem.: *Come, come: you talke.*

Desdemona speaks the eight lines about her mother's maid Barbara; after two lines and a half, there is a metrical gap,

And did forsake her. (x) She had a Song of Willough,

the interval (x) intimating a gesture of repose or a musing attitude. She afterwards starts from that brown study—expressed in a soliloquy—at the words
: *prythee dispatch.*

Aem.: *Shall I go fetch your Night-gowne?*

(Emilia seems to be rather forgetful—she had been asked to do so a long time before!)

Des.: *No, do vn-pin me here,*

This Lodouico is a proper man &c.

We wonder what Emilia may have been doing all the while; she cannot have been busy with the sheets, the bed being in an adjoining room, to which they both go at the end of the scene. And yet, Emilia is not merely a confidante, to whom Desdemona unburdens her heart, she acts herself. It is Emilia who has prepared the fatal cloth. She is busy in some way, even if we cannot quite make out what she does. In similar scenes of a French play the confidante merely sits in front of the heroine. Shakespeare's symbolism of stage property is most evident, no trifles are shown or spoken of on the stage. We should not see Desdemona "vn-pinned", if this action had not the eery flavour of "nevermore": the action reminds us of the words of Antony:

Vnarme Eros, the long dayes task is done,

And we must sleepe, (A. & C. 4. 11).

Desdemona is unpinned by Emilia, but she is not undressed; therefore she does not need her "nightly wearing" while we see her.

Even Desdemona's song, which follows after these lines, is not free from references to things and gestures. The singer interrupts her song by admonitions like

(Lay by these) (i.e. "the pins")

(Prythee high thee: he'll come anon)

(Nay that's not next)

The latter remark is not clear. Does that refer to the line last sung, meaning that she mistook the order of verses—or did Emilia draw out the wrong pin?

Hark, who is't that knocks.

Aem.: *It's the wind.*

The word hark is the last indication of a gesture; Desdemona shudders and looks around her. This is another opportunity of comparing Shakespeare's stagecraft with that of a modern author. Shakespeare produces all the atmosphere and light and the weird *Stimmung* of that particular moment with the ten words from "Hark" to "wind". And now let us collate this with the "curtain call routine", the "electrical plot", and the "carpenter's" and "costume plot" in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*; with hints like "As Traveller is 5 ft. on stage: Fade out Right Pinspot, fade out front spots # 3 and # 4", and prescriptions of "pink spots", "blue spots", "blue x-rays", and "amber x-rays". The other half of the third scene is mere discussion without a single textuary stage-direction. Desdemona is now to go to the bedroom, in the antechamber of which we seem to have been. "There" generally contains a deictic gesture; but Othello's "dismissje your Attendant there" is probably non-deictic, it is simply a definition of the place: "there" is a syntactical contraction for "when you are there" (i.e. in the bedroom) and not an allusion to Emilia, who is standing in the background when her master speaks. The scene is full of problems from the producer's point of view:

Why does not Shakespeare locate the scene in the bedroom already?—The scene begins with Lodovico's conversation with Othello and Desdemona; Lodovico, as a stranger, could not possibly be introduced into the bedroom. Moreover, the stage is needed for other purposes and Desdemona, if she were in bed already, would have to stay behind the screen of the tiring-house all the while. This is the reason why she has to leave the stage completely before she appears for the last time.

Then, why does Emilia linger over the orders of her mistress?—If Desdemona's wishes were executed at once, the scene would be finished before the discussion which is to explain her integrity is over. From the gestic point of view, the scene may even be called a makeshift. If Emilia hurries to the execution of the orders, a longer conversation is impossible. Besides, a quiet atmosphere must be prepared—according to Shakespeare's contrast structure—before the turmoil of the fifth act (the row in the street and the murder of Desdemona). The contrast is produced by the quiet gesturing of Emilia; the triviality of the action and of the things connected with it (vn-pinning; pins); the sweet melancholy of Desdemona's song add to the charm of the situation.

After the song, all action disappears; there is a perfect quietness and a total absence of gestures on the stage. Is this mere carelessness on the part of the poet? The reverse is the case: The spectator, or rather the theatrical action itself, are, so to speak, allayed by enchantment. Desdemona's song is a cradle song. In Hamlet, there is a similar gestic blank before the final contention: the Hamlet-Horatio-Osric—"Lord" scene with its zero at "the readineffe is

all"; the fourth act of King Lear ends with a similar stillness: tears drop on the old man's face when Cordelia weeps, the king wipes them away with one hand, making sure that the wet drops *are* tears; the gestures die away completely. In Macbeth, the entire absence of gestures is reached in the long speeches of Malcolm and Macduff (4. 3. 1-137).

Ophelia offering Hamlet's gifts to the prince must express girlish timidity, sadness, disappointment, dejection, and compulsion at the same time. This scene must have been a hard task for Shakespeare's boy-players (if they did not simply bungle it): "Take these againe ... There my Lord" (Ham. 3. 1.). There is a great sadness in "these", something hopelessly gloomy, to which a similar gesture had to correspond. One may object—and to a certain degree the objection may be justified—that it is our modern sense of psychological refinement that makes us discover such things in a poet of the 16th and 17th centuries, and that neither the actor nor the spectator of Shakespeare's age expected anything but fustian: but this would not quite do justice to Shakespeare's technique. Even if most of the finer gestures got lost with bombasting acting, we cannot deny that they actually were implied in the text and that if the audience did not discover them, the poet must have been in advance of his age.

In Cor. (1. 5) the plunderers drag on the stage all sorts of worthless household furniture: tin-ware, cushions, leaden spoons, doublets that the hangman would bury with those that wore them, things of which Coriolanus has a horror as of everything that is plebeian. Three little sentences are sufficient to brand the rubbish they have stolen and Shakespeare probably left it to the actors to provide for a funny medley of old useless things; the word "this" leaves a blank to be filled in by the respective actors.

Enter certaine Romans with spoiles.

1 Rom. *This will I carry to Rome.*

2 Rom. *And I this.*

3 Rom. *A Murrain on't, I tooke this for Siluer.* Exeunt.

Especially the third soldier is almost exhorted to extemporise: the discovery of the worthlessness of his booty makes an amusing little pantomime in itself. The actions of the three soldiers stand out against the musical accompaniment: *Alarum continues still a-farre off*. On the ghastly background of slaughter and war in a ransacked city (as indicated by the noise of the alarums and the flourishes) the poet shows us the human wretchedness of greediness with a grim smile. The scene is inserted between the appearance of Martius, who is dripping all blood, and Martius's diatribe, which has its apex in the curse: "downe with them". We do not see if the order to dispatch them is carried out by the general's soldiers. A contemptible and a heroic action are designated by two types of gestures, and from this juxtaposition results an atmosphere characteristic of the Shakespearean stage.

A strange custom is the action of writing down the speeches of others; twice we find it in the most uncanny situation, viz. in *Ham.* and in *Mac.* Hamlet, who has just been left by the ghost of his father, searches his pockets for his tables. The external purpose—to write down what he has been told by his father—is not a sufficient reason for Hamlet's note-taking; the real aim seems rather to be a psychological one. The prince wants to master his inner unrest by an outward action.

A similar case is the passage in *Mac.* (5. 1. 35). Somewhere in the castle, Lady Macbeth appears with a taper in her hands. She somnambulates and rubs her hands. The doctor, who observes the scene, writes down (in short-hand?) the words he hears. He formulates the purpose of his doing with the words: "to satisfie my remembrance the more strongly". Could he, the subject, ever use the speeches thus written down in a lawsuit against the queen, his mistress? Hardly! Nor should I say that he is as excited as Prince Hamlet and acts to compensate his perplexity. What he does rather remind us of is the cool and composed behaviour of a student who observes a lunatic (somehow, we may compare him to the note-taker in *Pygmalion*).

On this occasion, another peculiarity of Shakespeare's gestic technique must be referred to: the poet generally indicates by a phrase that an action begins, but in most cases he omits telling when it is over. He forgets the natural, to speak in terms of music. A first example may be found in the scene in *Mac.* 5. 1 just mentioned. The queen appears with the taper—then she washes (or rubs) her hands. But what does she do with the candle in the meantime? Does she put it on a chair or table? She can only rub her hands when they are disengaged, especially if hands are rubbed as desperately and energetically as Lady Macbeth's. And the candle cannot simply be left out, it is necessitated by the words: How came she by that light. She probably leaves the stage again with the light in her hands; did Shakespeare forget it while he wrote? Or did he want to grant the players full scope? Professor Sprague has a long chapter on the stage-tradition of the sleep-walking scene (268–272). Mrs. Siddons put the light on a table and she was (according to the *European Magazine*, Febr. 1785) the first Lady Macbeth to do so. She writes herself that she found it impracticable to wash out that "damned spot" "with the vehemence that was certainly implied by both her own words, and those of her gentlewoman". Mrs. Siddons's innovation was first regarded as "presumptuous" by a man like Sheridan; but after a while, he "most ingenuously" congratulated her. "The Theatrical Censor" condemned the same behaviour in Mrs. Malmouth when she performed Lady Macbeth in Philadelphia on March 17, 1806, as ill calculated to maintain the audience in the belief that she was asleep. This is not correct. An expert¹⁸ assures us

¹⁸ Dr. John E. Staehelin, professor of psychology at the University of Basle.

that somnambulists are “able to execute simple and wonted actions correctly”. And, in reference to Lady Macbeth, he continues “they (i.e. somnambulists) can very well put a candle-stick in its usual place and light it”. She can do this as well as all the actions that are mentioned in 5. 1. 3 sq. (rising from her bed, throwing her night-gown upon her, unlocking her closet, taking forth paper &c.). Shakespeare was too good an observer to blunder in such things. It was, for instance, long thought that Desdemona’s speech after she had been choked was a physiological impossibility until the contrary was proved by medical authorities (cf. Furness, *Oth.*, 1. c).

Thus the cue is given when an actor is to kneel down, but it is his task to find out when he is supposed to rise again. Desdemona (4. 2. 151) says to Othello: “Heere I kneele”; but we do not learn from the text when she has to stand up again. And a few lines later, Iago tells her not to weep. When did she begin to do so? Hamlet (*Ham.* 3. 2) lies down and puts his head on Ophelia’s lap; he probably jumps up in the general tumult, though this is not attested by the text. Brutus asks Lucius (*J.C.* 4. 3) where he has his lute. “Here in the Tent”, the boy replies. A short time after, Brutus asks again to be played to and Lucius begins at once. He probably goes and gets his instrument in the meantime without further admonition. The poet’s word evokes a gesture, but it leaves the actor at liberty to do with it as he pleases. Many actions are omitted entirely in the text. Pedantry must not be expected from Shakespeare. Brutus exhorts Cassius to sheathe his dagger (4. 3. 106); whether and when he wants to do so is left to the actor.

I have already shown at the beginning of this chapter that things may have symbolical value, although this symbolism may not be carried through (*R. II* and his crown). Certain articles of daily use are especially apt to induce the poet to gestic symbolism, as sword, rings, cups, golden chains. Their stage-history would fill books. The reason is evident: the medieval and ancient stage had only that kind of stage-property. The gestures connected with them are extremely simple, as simple as the plots created by them. Rings may be given away, therefore taken from the finger, passed to someone else, exchanged, given back. “This ring” is mostly all the text says about them.¹⁹ A ring may be the pivot of a play and yet collect but very elementary gestures around it. If we study a play like *All’s Well*, we are astonished to see how conventional the actions are that follow the main actor, the ring, or rather the two rings. Bertram’s ring, the “monumentall (= ancestral) Ring” (4. 3) is for the first time mentioned in the third act (3. 2. 59), but it does not yet appear on the stage. (“When thou canst get the Ring vpon my finger, which never shall come off ... &c.”). Thus it is introduced *in contumaciam*. It is again spoken of in the seventh scene of the same act (3. 7. 23). Though

¹⁹ Cf. Lessing, *Minna von Barnhelm*, 1. 10, «Hier nimm diesen Ring!»

it is not on the stage, it goes together with the word "this", which seems to be a constant companion to the word ring, as well as to some other objects. In the fourth act only, the ring appears on the stage. Diana asks it of Bertram: "Giue me that Ring."

And as soon as the ring is alluded to, it is already given a symbolical value. It represents the family honour of Bertram. And his partner confronts it with her own honour: "Mine honour's such a Ring." Bertram is now convinced that he can only attain his aim if he yields in the question of the ring. He takes it from his finger (a gesture which is not expressed in his words yet) and hands it to the girl, as we learn from the text:

Heere, take my Ring.

My house, mine honor, yea my life be thine,

And I'll be bid by thee.

At this decisive point of the play, at which the hero engages himself fundamentally, all the interest of the spectator is concentrated on the gesture of the actor and this gesture strikes us by its very neutrality. The gesture with which he gives himself away for good is contained in the words "Heere, take my Ring", and it is much more impressive (and expressive!) than all the following words. The meeting between Diana, Helen and Bertram is settled, and Bertram—with another reference to "this ring"—is promised a gift in return. In 4.3, the ring appears again, but only from afar, in a discussion between the soldiers. The last scene of the fifth act gives the dénouement of the ring action. Diana shows the ring to prove her identity with Bertram's victim: "O behold this Ring, ..." And the old Countess at once acknowledges:

This is his wife

That Ring's a thousand proofes ...

"That" need not be, and probably was not, connected with a gesture. If it was, it was deictic, i.e. of one of the most commonplace of all gestures. The King also asks Bertram if: "she has that Ring of yours". No gesture again. In the end, Bertram's ring does not return to Bertram or to Helen, as one might expect; it remains with Diana. It vanishes from our horizon with Helen's words: "there (i.e. with Diana) is your Ring" (315).

With Helen's ring, the case is not much different. It appears in the fifth act only. Its function is evident: it reveals to Lafeu that Bertram must have met Helena in Florence. Bertram is to be engaged to Lafeu's daughter, and Lafeu asks for a gift for her. When Bertram gives the ring, Lafeu looks at it pensively and then (All's Well 5.3.79) says:

such a ring as this,

The last that ere I took her leave at court²⁰

I saw upon her finger.

²⁰ Dyce: The last time, ere she took her leave at court:

By this remark, the king's suspicion is roused. He has not been unaware of the ring and (a stage-direction in the text!) he confesses:

No pray you let me see it. For mine eye

While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd too't: ...

The king describes with these words what the careful observer in the auditory has certainly noticed himself. Though "to look at a thing" is not what we ordinarily might call a gesture, in this case it certainly is. The king was leaning attentively forward and gazing at Bertram's hand. By this gesture, the spectator is assured that this king is not absent-minded at all. The catastrophe is being prepared, there is summer lightning while the storm gathers. After the words "too't", the Folio has a colon. The king is given the ring, he looks at it silently, while Bertram stands there in tortured expectation. Then the lightning strikes:

The Ring was mine.

The rest of the scene contains no further gestures in connection with the ring, except when the king says:

Plutus (i.e. Plutus) himselfe

(summary: has no more knowledge of the secrets of the earth)

Than I haue in this Ring ...

The ring remains with the king, who puts it on his finger; at least it is there when Diana enters. A few lines later, the king confirms that "this Ring" is for him the best proof of Helen's death. A gesture is not directly connected with the word "this".

When Diana enters, she probably does not at once notice her ring on the king's finger. She asks Bertram: "Send for your Ring." To which Bertram replies: "I haue it not." King: "What Ring was yours I pray you."

The king begins to speak, Diana looks at him and notices the jewel on his hand. He gives it to her with the question:

Know you this Ring, this Ring was his of late

× U U | × ^ U | × × | × × | × ^ |

There is a pause (^) after "Ring", at the moment when he hands her the jewel. Another pause at the end of the line makes it possible for Diana to examine the ring: "And this was it I gaue him being abed", is the result of her examination. Bertram, who stands apart, must confess that the ring was hers. He seems to have stood apart since he was sounded by the king when the two women came in ("Come hither Count, do you know theſe Women?"). Now the Count has to step forth again, for the sovereign points at him and asks Diana if he is the man who met her at Florence. Parolles then speaks, and only when he is bidden to stand aside, the ring plot goes on. The king speaks to Diana and asks her, probably now holding the corpus delicti between forefinger and thumb: "This Ring you ſay was yours?" But when did Diana give him back the ring? or does "this" refer to the ring as being

still in her hand? Shakespeare does not distinguish between this (i.e. here) and that (i.e. there). The question is left to the actor's discretion. The next lines ("Where did you buy it ... on at pleasure") are mere quibbles and puzzles and have nothing to do with either the ring or gestures connected with it. The action is resumed at the point at which the king says: "This Ring was mine, I gaue it his first wife." It may be asked what the difference between "this ring" and "the ring" is. I should say that the latter is used when the ring is not in the speaker's hand, but this cannot be proved.

The king threatens Diana and tells her that she will be sent to prison, "vnless thou telst me where thou hadst this Ring". It is almost certain that the ring is no longer with Diana. When Helena appears, she says to Bertram:

... there is your Ring,

And looke you, heeres your letter: ...

But what is "there"? Does she point at the place where the king sits? Or at Diana? With this line, the ring disappears from the play, or rather from the text. Did the king ever give the ring to Diana to look at, and if so: when did she give it back to her sovereign? We cannot tell from the Folio, and later editions do not give us any stage-directions either.

If we look at what happens to other rings in other plays, we shall find much the same. In *Two Gent.* we find in the fourth act:

(4.4.76) *go presently, and take this Ring with thee,*

Deliu'er it to Madame Siluia ...

(4.4.90) *Well: giue her that Ring, and there withall*

This letter ...

"That", as well as "this", refer to something between his thumb and finger.

In the lines 102 and 136 ("This ring ..."), the demonstrative pronouns indicate deictic gestures, the rings are offered to someone; four lines later (143), Silvia speaks while the ring is in Julia's hand and again, as I already suggested in the case of *All's Well*, she uses the definite article for a thing not within her reach.

In the *M.W.W.* (3.4.104), Master Fenton gives the matchmaking Mrs. Quickly a ring with the words:

Giue my sweet Nan this Ring: there's for thy pains.

In his one hand he has the jewel, in the other the money with which he bribes her. As one could probably make out on which side men carried their purses in Shakespeare's day, we could even decide whether it was the left or the right in which he had the coins.

In the *Merchant of Venice* we certainly have an action of symbolical value in Portia's presenting the ring to Bassanio: she divests herself of her privileges and her personality, which adds weight to the little gesture. This item perfectly illustrates the difference between a true gesture and a mere action: if a personage tips a messenger, we have a gesture which is nothing more

than a mere conventionality, while here we find a genuine gesture. If Portia gave away a trinket in a sportful mood, the poet would not mention the act.

There is another ring-problem hidden in Tw. N. (2. 2). In 1. 5. 321, Malvolio was dispatched with the words:

Ol.: *Run after that same peeuish Messenger*

The countes man: he left this Ring behinde him.

Malvolio is but too glad to run errands when he sees a chance of pushing his rival aside. With reluctance in his face and alacrity in his heart he gives the ring "back" to Viola, who is clever enough to confess that she left it there:

Mal.: *Come sir, you peeuishly threw it to her: and her will is, it should be so returned. If it bee worth stooping for, there it lies, in your eye &c.*

With an angry gesture—indicated by his own words in the text—Malvolio must have thrown the ring down before his exit. But what happens then? Does Viola pick it up? or is it left on the stage? The passage might be explained, if we had a somewhat more reliable text than the first Folio.

She loues me sure, the cunning of her passion

Inuities me in this churlish messenger:

None of my Lords Ring? Why he sent her none; ...

Dyce exchanges the question-mark for an exclamation-mark (... ring!). At "none", Viola stoops and picks the ring up; when she has examined it, she probably puts it in her pocket. "None of my Lords Ring?" means: "I was perfectly right in supposing that the ring was not my master's." Schlegel translates: „Der Ring von meinem Herrn? – Er schickt ihr keinen.“ If we look at the metrical structure, the supposition that she picks the ring up is only confirmed:

None of my Lords Ring? Why he sent her none

Λ¹ | × U U | × × | ΛΛ² | × × | × × | ×

There are two rests in the line: (1) before she gathers up the ring and (2) when she examines it. Besides, the ring never again appears in the play, which is a little inconsistent, as Shakespeare is generally very careful with his stage-property.

But the ring is not the only piece of symbolical stage-material. The sword is an even more frequent article on the stage. It is required for fights, of course, and much trouble has arisen in explaining the stage-business of Ham. 5. 2 (cf. Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet?*).

Solemn oaths are taken upon a sword. The practice must have been familiar to the spectators as well as to the players, for there is never a textuary stage-direction by which the process is specified. We must certainly distinguish between two sorts of oaths upon the sword: the one that the owner of a sword swears himself, and the other which he makes his partner swear. In the first case, he simply touches the hilt of his sword while he speaks the words of his oath, in the latter he takes the sword out of its

sheath. In Ham. 1. 5. 154-160, the vow is stretched to a long scene. Hamlet's friends must swear that they will not speak of what they have seen or heard. But he has to exhort them several times until they consent to do so. They have to try out the whole stage until the ghost is at rest. The exact moment at which Hamlet unsheathes cannot be fixed, but I should say that it is line 148: "Indeed, vpon my sword, Indeed."

Hamlet, in contrast to others who swear, holds the blade in his hands, turning the hilt towards his friends. At this moment, the sword is no longer a mere weapon,—a symbol of manly courage and honour—it is a cross, too. And thus they swear by the cross and by the weapon. The gesture was probably to put their fingers upon the hilt while they swore, though the F_1 -text does not say anything about this. We cannot say when the oath is taken: the 1623-text has not even a stage-direction.

An analogous case is W. T. 3. 2. 125: *Officer*: "You here shal sweare vpon this Sword of Iustice ... &c." but in this play, there is a reply to this exhortation: *Cleo Dio*: "All this we sweare."

But we learn as little as in the preceding quotation from Ham. about what they actually do. We can only guess that the gesture must have been much the same as the Hamlet one.

This way of swearing by the sword is more clearly described in R. II, 1. 3. 178, where Richard says:

*Lay on our Royall sword, your banisht hands;
Swear by the duty that you owe to heauen (sword, cross!)
... To keepe the Oath that we administer:
You neuer²¹ shall ... &c.*

The gesture is implied in the text. It may be asked, at what moment the swearers put their fingers on the hilt; but we cannot tell if they do it while he "administers" the oath, or only when they say:

Bull.: *I sweare.*

Mow.: *And I, to keepe all this.*

We should think the latter, but we could not prove it. As to the hand with which they swear, it has been clearly proved by B. L. Joseph that it was the right hand (*El. Act.*, p. 102)²² Antigonus swears by "this sword" in W. T. 2. 3. 183.

²¹ never.

²² At the same place, B. L. Joseph beautifully demonstrates that Hamlet (Ham. 3. 2.) accompanies his reply to Rosencrantz: "So I do still, by these pickers and stealers" by seemingly swearing with his left hand, which was regarded as the idle and therefore stealing hand; he swears withershins. Alexander Schmidt (2. 860a) and his source Whalley give the more general explanation hand for "pickers and stealers" and they prove it by referring to the church catechism (cf. Furness 1. c.). Thus the "pickers and stealers" might as well refer to both hands (cf. Joseph on "double oath", 1. c. p. 102) as a way of swearing very emphatically.

The other type—swearing by one's own sword—is to be found in *Much Ado* 4. 1. 278 as well as in *M. of V.* 2. 1. 24. In the case of the Prince of Morocco, the qualities of the sword are even specified in a showy way by the swearer:

By this Symitare

That slew the Sophie, and a persian Prince

That won three fields of Sultan Solyman, ...

We must not neglect, either, that in those two cases the oath is not taken seriously. It must be executed with an air of mockery: in the first case the personage itself jests, in the latter it is laughed at by the author.

In *R. II* 1. 1. 78, however, we have an instance of swearing by one's sword where the swearer is in earnest. Bolingbroke is the prototype of the thundering, bragging warrior—the poet is still experimenting:

Bull.: *Pale trembling Coward, there I throw my gage ... &c.*

Mow.: *I take it vp, and by that sword I sweare ...*

Neither is “by my Sword” a gesture in *1 H. IV* 5. 3. 26. The words have too little weight in that line to be accompanied by a respective action: there is no time for a gesture.

When Bardolf (*H. V* 2. 1) cries:

By this sword, hee that makes the first thrust, Ile kill him: By this sword, I wil.

(to which *Pist.*: Sword is an oath, &c.!)

he already has the sword in his hand, ready to part the two enemies. He probably brandishes it while he speaks. In the last scene of *2 H. VI*, Salisbury declares:

Now by my Sword, well hast thou fought today: ...

This is not an oath either, and thus it is not accompanied by a movement of his hand. It is a mere exclamation; he might as well say “By George!”

The cup is much less frequent as an indicator of gestures, though the word very often occurs metaphorically, Falstaff's cups need not be mentioned. The strangest case—from the point of gestology—is Romeo's cup. Only Shakespeare himself could resolve this difficulty, though he might have to confess a mistake in construction (*R. & J.* 5. 3. 161).

Iul.: *What's here? A cup clos'd in my true loves²³ hand?*

Poysen I see bath bin his timelesse end

O churle, drinke all? ... &c.

Where does Romeo take his cup from? When he enters on the stage, he gets from Balthasar a “mattocke”, a “wrenching iron”, and a “light”. He then fights with Paris, and it is not (and need not be) specified what he shall do with his instruments. But when does he fill the poison into the cup, where does he take both from, and most of all: where is the liquid into which he

²³ F1 lo:es.

has to pour the poison? (cf. *App.*: Put this in any liquid thing you will / And drinke it off ... &c. R. & J. 5.1.77). Others have noticed this difficulty before. Sprague does not record any stage-tradition; and Schlegel translates:

*Was ist das hier? – Ein Becher, festgeklemmt
In meines Trauten Hand?*

Now there exists in the Reclam Editions an acting Shakespeare, the first volume of which is edited by C. Fr. Wittmann. The text is an adaption, and a very poor one. It may be regarded as a first approach to the moving-picture style of producing Shakespeare. After the line: *Apoth.*: „Nur meine Armut, nicht mein Wille weicht“, he has the stage-direction: (Er geht ins Haus und kommt sogleich mit einem Fläschchen). According to this, Wittmann, who was aware of the discrepancy of the two passages, transforms:

*Was ist das hier? Ein Fläschchen, festgeklemmt
In meines Trauten Hand?*

Why did Shakespeare make it a cup? We cannot tell, but we guess that it was the higher symbolical value of the cup that induced him to do so.

Claudius' poisoned cup is an object of highest interest to the spectator. When the king drinks and afterwards throws the pearl into the cup, we have reached such a degree of uncanny intensity in the play that the king's gestures are, so to speak, pantographed by means of the cannon fire. The dropping of the pearl might escape the spectator's observation; the booming of the cannon must needs be noticed. It is the strongest accent the poet can use in stressing a gesture.

When Cassius and Brutus drink to each other at the end of the fourth act, their words and gestures are almost given the importance of a holy communion:

*Bru.: Give me a bowl of wine,
In this I bury all unkindnesse Cassius. Drinkest.
Cas.: My heart is thirsty for that Noble pledge.
Fill Lucius, till the Wine ore-swell the Cup:
I cannot drink too much of Brutus love.*

The solemnity of this mystic scene has its wisely calculated place in the general economy of the play, as I have tried to show above.

But stage property may also serve to heighten the humour of a scene. There are two such cases in M.N.D., and if we compare them to the scene in J.C., we once more realize how wide a range of thought and action Shakespeare had at his disposal. One is the scene M.N.D. 5.1.188, where the poet clearly bases his action on some piece of stage-property. The "wall" begins to speak by presenting itself to the audience and then continues:

*This Loame, this rough-cast, and this stone doth shew
That I am that same Wall; the troth is so.*

The three successive demonstrative pronouns obviously refer to deictic gestures. We cannot tell how the wall was constructed, but we may imagine the player to have been a sort of sandwichman, his arms jutting out from between the two paste-boards representing the wall. With awkward gestures he must have pointed at the things he named. The passage is one of those many that make us feel how little we know about the Shakespearean stage. It is possible as well that Snout did not carry such a thing as a pasteboard wall around him; he may have been clad in a grey or white cloak and at the words:

*And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearfull Louers are to whisper.*

he stood there with his arms akimbo, pointing with the forefinger of his left hand at the space between his right arm and his waist.

Can the actions of a player be better directed than by Pyramus's words:

*Shew me thy chinke, to blinke through vvith mine eine.
Thanks courteous vvall. Ioue shiield thee vell for this.
But what see I?*

At "shew me ..." &c., Snout probably puts his one arm akimbo again, and Pyramus stoops to look through. "Thanks &c." is the acknowledgment of his partner's gesture. At "What see I?" we watch him spying through the wall. Another interpretation of Snout's gesture would be to suppose him stretching out one of his hands and forming a chink by means of his fingers only (either by spreading them in V-form or by producing a hole with thumb or forefinger). Sprague records no stage-business.²⁴

A strange stage-direction is included in the following passage:

Moon: *This lanthorne doth the horned Moone present: My selfe, the man i'th Moone doth seeme to be.*

Du.: *This is the greatest error of all the rest; the man should be put into the Lanthorne. How is it els the man i'th Moone?*

Dem.: *He dares not come there for the candle. For you see, it is already in snuffe* (M. N. D. 5. 1. 259 ff.).

What did Shakespeare plan in his dramatic imagination? The lanthorn is in snuff: an Elizabethan quibble. He is in snuff means that he is not very intelli-

²⁴ Schlegel has a stage-direction that has no model in F1: Wand hält die Finger in die Höhe. The stage-direction has been customary since Theobald. We must state, however, that though it is a good interpretation, it is no more. If we pursue the text, we shall find Thisbe approaching the wall and spying through it, if she can see her lover at the other end of it:

Pir.: *O kisse me through the hole of this vile wall.*

This.: *I kisse the wals hole, not your lips at all.*

I doubt if the "wals hole" was originally presented by fingers only, but I am not able to give a satisfactory explanation. Was the wall even more than a mere "sandwich"? Was it a frame with a chink that could be enlarged by the man inside the frame?

gent, that his spirit is decayed with age. By his behaviour, the Moon-performer had to exhibit his spiritual simplicity: gait, gestures, facial expression, all. But the quibble does not work if the lantern is not "in snuff", too. Alexander Schmidt (Lex.) quotes the passage and gives the following explanation: "to be in snuff: to take offence." It obviously refers to the candle—but what sense would this make? What should the candle take offence at? Schlegel does not seem to have understood the passage when he translates:

Er darf es nicht wegen des Lichts.

Er würde es in Feuer und Flammen setzen.

(An allusion, I suppose, to the clown's alcoholism.) And yet, there must be a certain occurrence on the stage to which Shakespeare refers. Did the light in the lantern flicker? or was it dying out? Professor Sprague has no stage-tradition in his book, though he records that "when Madame Vestris gave the play at Covent Garden in 1840, some properties used were the following: a 'lighted lantern hung by a pitchfork', as it was often to be in later productions &c.". Has the pitchfork something to do with the snuff of the candle? I could imagine that by carrying the light by means of a pitchfork, the light began to flicker, perhaps to die out and thus the poet's aim in writing the quibble would be fulfilled. But all this is uncertain and we shall never see the *Midsummer Night's Moon* again as Shakespeare's audience (and even less as he himself in his imagination) saw it. The only clear gesture in the whole passage is in the Moon's own line: This Lanthorne does the horned Moore present. The first time that he speaks it, he is interrupted by Demetrius and Theseus, and he has to begin again. Now what is the actor to do in the meantime, what gestures is he to execute? For he must act and cannot simply wait until his two partners have come to an end with their lines. May we suppose, as Dr. Flatter does in many other cases in his book on *Shakespeare's Producing Hand*, that we have here an example of simultaneousness? I do not think that this thesis would work in this case, as the Moon begins his speech anew. They stop him and he is certainly at a loss what to do for a moment. He may glance at his part and try to regain his mental equilibrium. Or he may cough and cast an indignant look at the interloper, then strike an attitude and begin again. Whatever he may do—he must act; Shakespeare left it to the actor or spoke about his intentions during the rehearsals of the play.

The letter is another piece of stage-property, the most common beside the sword. The gestures by which it is accompanied are throughout simple; they represent a type in themselves. Mostly they are uninteresting. The most boisterous scene is certainly the letter-scene in *Two Gent.* (1.2.96). This highly dramatical passage begins with the words: "Here is a coil with protestation: ..." Julia then sends her servant away and starts her long dramatic soliloquy. She first curses her hands to have torn such "louing words". Then she announces her plan: "Ile kisse each feuerall paper, for amends."

She finds a scrap “against the bruizing-stones”, “trampling contemptuously” on it. A new paper follows which she takes to her bosom after having kissed it. And once more she searches for scraps with the name of Protheus on them. The wind seems to carry the scraps away, which she has to indicate by gestures of her hands. She then finds one with both her own and Protheus’ name on it:

Poore forlorne Protheus, passionate Protheus:

To the sweet Julia: *that ile teare away:*

And yet I will not, fith so prettily

He couples it, to his complaining Names;

Thus will I fold them, one vpon another;

Now kisse, embrace, contend, doe what you will.

The passage is full of gestures, most of them being highly original. There is not one stage-direction; which makes it even more valuable. The gestic style is very condensed; the psychology refined.

The ordinary letter intermezzo is of no great interest: the letter is given to a servant and in a new scene it is delivered by the messenger to the addressee. In both cases the servant may be tipped, but he need not.

There may, however, be more psychology in the opening of a letter, as for instance in Cym. 3.2. Imogen delays opening her husband’s letter; and all her movements (how she first casts a look at his handwriting, then waits and reflects, then breaks the wax and hesitates again before finally producing the message) are recorded in the poet’s own words. After “Good Wax, thy leaue” she starts dreaming again: “bleft be / You Bees that make these Lockes of counsaile &c.” This is not only a poetic association which the poet wants to put in just because he has had it: this is a young woman’s reverie that makes one think of certain Dutch paintings, with the difference that Vermeer shows the act of reading itself. Shakespeare’s reason for this procrastination is a double one: firstly he intensifies the dramatic tension and secondly he deepens our knowledge of Imogen’s character.

Some miscellaneous cases of an intimate relation between things and gestures must close the chapter. The tiring-house of the Globe must have contained a map: it appears twice on the stage. In 1 H. IV, Hotspur first complains of having forgotten the map:

a plague vpon it,

I haue forgot the Mappe.

but Glendower, who probably had it with him, inserts:

No, here it is: &c.

and about seventy lines later, they sit and study it:

Come, heere’s the Mappe: ...

The poet makes us follow Mortimer’s hand as it glides over the map; or is not Hotspur’s line:

See how this River comes me cranking in &c.
an almost ideal stage-direction for the actor?

The other scene in which the map appears is the first scene of the first act of *Lear*. There is a strange textual difference between the Qq and the Folio, and either of the two readings may be Shakespearean. The Quarto is not a very reliable text, and it may be that our interpretation is merely based on a simple omission of words. Line 37 sq. we read:

*Meane time we will expresse our darker purpofes
The Map there.*

Should we not say that the abruptness of the second line gives a good idea of a character that is wont to command, to govern? Schlegel seems to have thought so, too, and he chose the Q-text for his two lines:

*Derweil enthüll'n wir den verschwiegnen Vorsatz.
Die Karte dort!*

And yet I think that the F₁-reading is the correct one. The Q-text demands a very harsh movement of the hand, which does not correspond to Lear's mood before the quarrel with Cordelia. His irascibility is not yet roused, he is still the good old father who is about to present his three daughters with adequate portions of his kingdom. The mild wish: "Giue me the Map there" is much more what an elderly gentleman would say and do. For the movement corresponding to it will be one of quiet expectation, with a slight touch of awkwardness and clumsiness. Twenty years earlier, I should say, Lear might have said what he says in the Quarto—or five minutes later, after the quarrel.

Books occasionally appear on the stage. The best known of them all is Hamlet's book (of which assiduous study has even been able to make out the title since Shakespeare's day!). The Queen—who probably has a dislike to literature—takes Hamlet's reading as a sign of melancholy, which is an opinion among common people even nowadays:

*But looke where sadly (gesture!) the poore wretch
Comes reading (2. 2. 168).*

Busybody Polonius at once makes up his mind to accost the prince. It is impossible to say if Hamlet is actually reading or if he carries the book about under the pretence of melancholy absorption. We can but say what impression his gestures and his whole bearing made on the observer of that time. His slow gait and his eyes fixed on the book are interpreted by the Queen as signs of deep sadness. The book itself is here a gesture, expressing sadness. When Polonius muses on Hamlet's words, the latter opens his book again, feigning to listen with one ear only while he says "Words, words, words" and "Betweene who?" Before his long address, he closes it again, patting it gently and by way of demonstration with his knuckles (palm turned upwards) at the words "the Satyricall flauie faies here ...".

The book in Shakespeare's plays signifies either study or prayer. Buckingham, speaking about Richard Gloucester, says (R. III 3.7.97): "And see a Booke of Prayer in his hand." But Richard is a mere actor, his nature has nothing to do with devotion, he leers at those who admire his absorption. He himself seems to point with a gesture at his book when after the re-entrance of Buckingham he says:

you may partly see,

How farre I am from the desire of this (i.e. "impure blots and staynes").

The book and the gesture of absorbed reading are the visible expressions of devotion and goodness.

A book and yet no book is Stephano's bottle in Temp. 2.2.135-146. The Book by which people generally swear is, of course, the Bible—but Caliban is twice exhorted to "kisse the Booke" (i.e. the brandy bottle), as he can rather adore things spirituous than spiritual. We certainly have here a quibble by gestures.

On the whole, we may say that Shakespeare's personages seldom read books. The reason of it will be that a reading person lacks dramatical fitness. A thinker or a scholar would not be dramatical in Shakespeare's sense; he does not act enough. Even Hamlet is not a reader—when he reads, the act of perusing is only a symbol for Hamlet's spirituality. Professor Bradley strongly emphasises the fact that "action is the centre of the story", and that "action is essentially the expression of character".²⁵

In the plays of Shakespeare there is no Doctor Faustus. Marlowe uses books and book-studies several times in his play—in Shakespeare there is no such thing. Book-reading is made use of, but merely for fun, in the Taming. In 3.1. of this play, Lucentio and Bianca "construe" Latin sentences, and though there is no direct indication, we may assume that they follow their lines with their forefingers:

Luc.: *Hic Ibat, as I told you before, Simois, I am Lucentio, hic est, sonne unto Vincentio of Pisa, Sigeria tellus, disguised thus to get your loue, &c.*

Before they begin to read, Bianca asks:

Where left you last?

and Lucentio answers:

Heere Madam: ...

—in words and gestures a typical scene from school-life. Had the poet been a tutor, as some suppose, before he came to London?

Writing with or without pen and ink on the stage is almost as rare as careful reading. One of the few cases is to be found in Titus (4.1). And in this case, writing is only introduced to procure a scene of highest dramatic tension: Lavinia is to reveal the names of the three rascals who have

²⁵ Bradley, Introduction.

ravished her. Marcus teaches her how to write without hands, namely by putting a staff to his mouth and guiding it with his feet. It is doubtful if the stage-direction is Shakespeare's:

He writes his Name with his staffe, and guides it with feete and mouth.

The following text is as explicit as the stage-direction:

This sandie plot is plaine, guide if thou canst

This after me, I haue writ my name*

Without the helpe of any hand at all.

Modern editors insert the stage-direction at the pause after "me", which I have marked by an asterisk. Lavinia then puts (or is given) the "staffe" to her lips, guides it with her stumps and writes. And Titus acknowledges the fact of her writing with the words:

*Oh doe ye read my Lord what she hath writ?*²⁶

The actor is thus told by stage-directions as well as by text-directions what Lavinia is to do.

Titus does not only give an example of writing, but also one of reading in a book, or rather of communicating by means of a book. Before Lavinia writes in the sand the names of those who ravished her, she indicates by gestures that she wants a book for some purpose as yet dark to the others. If we follow the text closely, we find a number of hints for the players implied in the text, which only careful examination can retransform into lively play. The boy's first speech (Titus 4. 1. 1) shows him running from his aunt. He is afraid of her strange doings. Marcus then continues:

What Meanes my Neece Lavinia by these signes?

and Titus replies:

Feare not Lucius, somewhat doth she meane:

See Lucius see, how much she makes of thee:

Some whether would she haue thee goe with her.

This is not yet a very precise indication of what gestures the poet wants. And until we read more, we still need the stage-direction at the beginning of the act, which says that the boy "flies from her with his bookes vnder his arme". My principal question is: where are the books? They certainly are not any longer "vnder his arme", for we learn in the following passage that the boy had been frightened by his aunt's behaviour, which "made me downe to throw my bookes, and flie". Consequently the books must lie somewhere on the stage and from the text we may guess that she tries to draw the boy to that place ("I will most willingly attend your Ladyship"). After: "Lucius I will", the text has an interval of four beats. The interval is filled up with moving to the spot where the books lie. Lavinia begins to stir the books either with the stumps of her arms or with her feet.

²⁶ writ] F1: writs.

Lucius is told to pick them up and open them. While he does so, and Titus speaks the lines until “What book?”, Lavinia acts too. Some editors seem to think that “what book” is simply there by negligence of the printer. But I think that the exclamation need not be left out, if only we put a dash instead of a question-mark.

Lavinia:	Titus:	Marcus:
busy in looking up a passage in Ovid	<i>Come and take chose of all my Library, And so beguile thy sorrow, till the beaueus Reneale the damn'd contriuer of this deed.</i>	
hears him speak of one ravisher only and		
raises her arms to indicate that she was injured by three men.	<i>What booke—Why lifts she vp her armes in sequence (3 × 1) thus ?</i>	<i>I thinke she meanes that ther was more then one Confederate in the fact ... &c.</i>
sees herself interpreted and begins to run through the pages of a book by “tossing” it with her stumps, as she had done before.	<i>Lucius what book (†) is that she toffeth so ?</i> <i>Boy: Grandfier 'tis Ouids Metamorphosis ...</i>	

Thus the two words (“what booke”) may have slipped into the text and may not belong there. But the gestic evidence seems strong enough not only to permit their readmittance into the canonical text but even to prove their necessity. Anyhow, the critical apparatus of so thorough an edition as the Cambridge text ought to mention the two words.

From the stage-business point of view, Titus Andronicus is certainly one of the richest plays (and at the same time one of the most exhilarating). At several points it looks like Grand Guignol at its worst, e.g. when Titus’ peaceful nature is illustrated in the fly-and-knife scene:

[Marcus strikes the dish with a knife.]
*What doest thou strike at, Marcus, with thy knife.*²⁷
 Marc.: *At that that I haue kil’d my Lord, a Flye.*²⁸
 And.: *Out on the murderour: thou kil’st my hart,*
Mine eyes (are) cloi’d with view of Tirranie:
A deed of death done on the Innocent.
*Becomes not Titus brother*²⁹: *get thee gone,*
I see thou art not for my company.
 Marc.: *Alas (my Lord) I haue but kild a flie &c.* (Titus 3.2.51.)

When Marcus explains that he killed it only because of its resemblance to the abominable Moor Aaron, Titus at once changes his behaviour and cries:

²⁷ What ... knife] F1: What doest thou strike at Marcus with knife.
²⁸ Flye] F1: Flys.
²⁹ brother] F1: broher.

And.: O, o, o

Then pardon me for reprehending thee,

For thou hast done a Charitable deed:

Give me thy knife. I will insult on him, ... (two lines)

There's for thy selfe, and that's for Tamira: Ah firrah, ... (Titus 3.2.)

We have here an example of Shakespeare's early manner of making his players act. And from this passage there is but a little step to Hamlet's sticking the rat:

There's for thy selfe, and that's for Tamira

with its sharp and almost alliterating accents is an exact parallel to the line in Ham.:

How now, a Rat? dead for a Ducate, dead.

Stage-directions by means of the metre—or by the uncanny beat of the consonants rather.

Gestures are intimately connected with articles throughout the works of the author; it would fill volumes to pursue all the many articles appearing on the stage. In some cases the gestures produced by the managing of stage-property are more than astonishing and give the play its thrill. Clemen has pointed out the importance of preparation for the dramatic climax in Shakespeare's works.³⁰ Thus in *Timon* (3.6) the uncovering of the dishes is introduced by a long series of almost insignificant speeches; that gossip is only interrupted by first announcements of what is going to happen as e.g. (55) "All couer'd Dishes". Then follows *Timon's* mystifying prayer, accompanied by pseudo-devout gestures. Towards the end of this prayer the explosion becomes ripe, and it takes place when the words:

Vncover Dogges, and lap

are spoken. For a moment, the company of guests stands transfixed with amazement; then the flight begins. *Timon's* speech is full of text-directions:

This is Timons last,

Who sticke and spangled you with Flatteries,

Washes it off and sprinkles in your faces.

Your reeking villany.

And again, as in *Lear's* speech on the heath, the metrical structure of the soliloquy is such as to express the inner movement of the personage: with alliterations and detonations of consonants, such as:

Line loath'd, and long

Most smiling, smooth, detested Parasites,³¹

You Fooles of Fortune, Trencher-friends, Times Flyes.

³⁰ Shakespeares Bilder, ihre Entwicklung und ihre Funktionen im dramatischen Werk, Bonn 1936, p. 112.

³¹ The comparison with the German verse in Schlegel shows the difference in gestic pregnancy: „Stets lächelnde, abscheuliche Schmarotzer.“

And then he begins his assault upon his guests. He at once speaks and acts, gesticulating and naming his gestures:

What do'st thou go?

Soft, take thy Physicke first; thou too, and thou:

Stay I will lend thee money, borrow none.

What? All in Motion?

The subsequent complaints of the returning lords do not allow an exact collation with Timon's words. The third guest complains of having lost a cap, the fourth looks for his gown, the first complains that he has lost a "Jewell" from his hat. Then the second guest asks for a cap, too, and number three seems to answer "Heere 'tis".

However, it probably is not an answer to the second guest but simply a *εὐρηκα* spoken to himself when he finds his own cap. The gown is found, too, by the fourth guest, while the jewel seems lost. Guest number three seems to have been knocked about most, which he testifies with the remark that he felt Timon's madness "vpon (his) bones". The central gestic idea of this scene is certainly the uncovering of the dishes. The audience is not initiated into Timon's secret and their attention and expectation is as great as the guests'. Will snakes creep out of the dishes or is there some other frightful secret hidden? The hands approach the lids, the lids are opened—water, nothing but luke-warm water. But the spectator has no time to be disappointed, for Timon, at the climax of his fury, proceeds to action.

Among the medieval reminiscences we find the gauntlet. To throw down the gauntlet was a gesture the value of which the Shakespearean auditory still knew and that it appreciated as a sure prologue to a quarrel. Such an intermezzo is the first scene in the first act of R. II. Bolingbroke throws down his gauntlet (1.69), then exhorts his adversary to "ftoope" and take it up. The scene is thus strictly guided by the poet's remarks. In line 78, Mowbray executes Bolingbroke's exhortation with the words: "I take it up", and it is now his turn to "hurle downe" his gage "interchangeably". Between taking up and hurling down his own gauntlet to his enemy's feet there lie 69 lines. Then follows a gestic gap: we never learn at what moment Bolingbroke takes up the gauntlet. When Gaunt speaks to his son, the latter has already taken up the dangerous object. The two pugnacious gentlemen refuse to put down their gauntlets. The repetition of "when" and "Obedience bids" in Old Gaunt's words:

When Harrie when? Obedience bids,

Obedience bids I should not bid again ...

expresses anger and impatience; a gesture must correspond to them. But the two adversaries' answer is a "negative gesture"; they do not do what they are expected to do. They leave the stage with the respective gages in their

hands. The atmosphere of suspense in this scene is intensified by the final absence of gesture and the mute refusal of Bolingbroke and Mowbray.³²

The number of cases in which gestures arise from the stage-property might be multiplied and this enumeration would make a volume. What we wanted to point out is the fact of such a connexion.

4. THE "SYNTAX OF GESTURES"

In his edition of Racine's *Phèdre*, Jean-Louis Barrault, a French stage-specialist, speaks of the general problems of staging a play and of acting. He there speaks of what he somewhat inadequately calls the syntax of gestures, as opposed to the morphology of gestures. "Every gesture is indeed comparable to a sentence. The attitude, the movement proper, the sense and significance that we can distinguish in a gesture—do they not remind us of subject, predicate, and object?" This statement emphasizes the fact that a gesture is not the mere up and down or to and fro of a limb, but that there are different aspects of one and the same event. A certain gesture is only possible in certain surroundings, it radiates in all directions, it has its cause and its consequences. It prepares others and is prepared by others. Clemen points out how much certain scenes and parts of scenes are prepared for by the careful disposition of certain dramatic and metaphorical elements. And Caroline Spurgeon³³ comes to the same result that we have so frequently obtained in the analysis of gestures: "—change and contrast attract him very much."

There is a systematical change of quiet and animated scenes. The alternation of gestures of different quality is not bound to acts and scenes; they oscillate independently, running throughout the play without stopping at the boundaries of the scenes. Their unity is the phase, several of which may make a scene; a phase may be identical with a scene.

If we consider *Ham.* from this point of view, we notice that the beginning of an act is generally the contrast of its ending: if we put the acts together, as was done in Elizabethan performances, we never discover that two animated scenes meet, or vice versa.

The tables with the structural scheme of *Ham.* will be found in the appendix to this essay (p. 133).

The first scene of the first act already shows how regularly the poet varies his gestures. The enormously passionate gesticulation of 1.3 is in strong

³² Other gauntlet-scenes are John 5.2.156, 1 H. IV. 1.1.146, T. & C. 4.5.177, and Lear 4.6.91.

³³ Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* 1934, p. 58.

contrast with the preceding farewell of Laertes (e) as well as with the idyll of 2.a (Polonius and Reynaldo). In the fourth act, the phases become longer, which may be explained as an influence of the coming events: ([abcd] [e] [fgh]). Act 4. f is already the beginning of 5.a. But Shakespeare does not leave the spectator with the impressions of the final catastrophe, as will be shown in chapter ten of this book ("Death").

The same principle may be observed in Mac.. The murder of Lady Macduff (4. 2) and of her child is counterpoised by the extremely quiet dialogue in the traditional classical style between Malcolm and Macduff; if the second scene closes with the cry of "Murder!", the third scene opens with the peaceful line: "Let vs seeke out some desolate shade, & there / Weepe our sad bosomes empty" spoken by Malcolm. If the last gestures of one scene were the butchering of the little son of Lady Macduff, the first of the next one is the quiet pacing up and down of Macduff and Malcolm; a stronger contrast between their hopeless situation and holiday calmness and Lady Macduff's hurrying out and crying "murder" cannot possibly be imagined. The dialogue between Macduff and Malcolm at first contains no gestures at all; when Rosse enters, it begins to lose some of its stiffness and Macduff speaks his resolute lines, already accompanied by similar gestures:

Front to Front,

Bring thou this Fiend of Scotland, and my selfe,

Within my Swords length bring him.

During this speech, we might imagine him to turn away from the others, looking resolutely in the direction of an imaginary Scotland. Perhaps even the sword is drawn and seems eager to stab that now invisible devil Macbeth. To do all this, the actor has to jump up from under the bower, where he and his companion have sat down. There is no direction for all this: but we cannot imagine the highly excited Macduff sitting like a statue under the boughs of his bush.

And again the atmosphere of the play changes. Gestures had the significance of the lighting of our modern stages. On page 131 of his *Introducing Shakespeare*, G.B. Harrison points out this fact and shows how much the change from prose to verse and vice versa acts in this direction: "As a modern producer gains effects of change and contrast by lighting and music, so Shakespeare changed the atmosphere of his scenes by contrasts of verse, tone, and speed." The parallelism of word and gesture makes the same changes of atmosphere visible in the gesticulation.

This raises the question of the gestic leitmotif. Some gesture may leaven a whole play, spreading in all directions. Coriolanus is pervaded by gestures of rebellion and riot. R. & J. begins with the gestures of mutual provocation and hatred and bullying: such gestures and clusters of gestures run throughout whole plays. In J.C., as well as in Cor., we find the mob

throwing up their night-caps, which is a source of nausea and utter disgust with vulgarity to Shakespeare's nobles. (Did the nutcracking mob among Shakespeare's audience appear in the theatre in their night-caps?)

In the centre of Lear we find the vision of the raving king in the storm. Gestures of madness spread throughout the play.

Hamlet is introduced by the nervous gesture of Bernardo; the atmosphere of the Hamlet world is dominated by gestures of misgiving and fear and nervousness.

Antony and Cleopatra kiss and embrace, when we first meet them in the first scene of the first act and this is the key-note of the whole play. Kisses, hand-shakes, and gestures connected with the body of the beautiful queen are typical of this tragedy. Harley Granville-Barker maintains that the corporeal beauty of the actors was quite irrelevant on the celibatary stage of the Elizabethans. This is certainly not correct for Cleopatra. A. & C. is decidedly the tragedy of sensuality, in which the characteristics mentioned above are of a clearly predominant position as compared with the other tragedies. Caroline Spurgeon, from her point of view, finds quite a different leitmotif in A. & C.: images drawn from the cosmos, the planetary and solar world dominate in her index-cards. The gestic leitmotif is the kiss. In the introductory scene to the play we already meet with a problem: what is "Heere is my space" (A. & C. 1. 1. 34)? He seems to embrace her; three lines later we have: "to do thus", which seems to refer to a new action. In a later part of the play, when the two are separated, Antony sends her an "Orient Pearle" that he has kissed himself, a material kiss so to speak:

Last thing he did (deere Quene)

He kist the last of many doubled kisses

This Orient Pearle ... (1. 5).

"There is Gold", says Cleopatra to the messenger, who is to fetch some message from her lover:

and heere.

My blewest vaines to kisse: a hand that kings

Haue lipt, and trembled kissing (2. 5).

And there is Scarus' remark that demonstrates how much the destiny of the two great lovers is decided by their kisses (3. 8. 16 sq.):

The greater Cantle of the world, is lost

With very ignorance, we haue kist away

Kingdomes, and Prouinces.

When Cleopatra quarrels with Antony, she offers her hand to the messenger that he may kiss it (3. 2):

Most kinde Messenger,

*Say to great Caesar this in disputation,
I kisse his conqu'ring hand*
and Thidias replies:

*Giue me grace to lay
My dutie on your hand.*
Cleopatra then continues:

*Your Caesars Father oft, (...)
Bestow'd his lips on that vnworthy place,
As it rain'd kisses.*

In the night before his final separation from Cleopatra, Antony makes the following vow:

*If from the Field I shall retorne once more
To kisse these Lips, I will appeare in Blood. (3. 11)*

His "soldier's kiss" on the following morning is short and rather uncere-
monious; it shows moreover that the poet distinguished between different
sorts of kisses, at least in a play in which kisses were of such a primordial
importance. The last longing of Antony is that of enjoying once more the
kisses of the Queen of Egypt:

*I am dying Egypt, dying; onely,
I heere importune death a while, vntill
Of many thousand kisses, the poore last
I lay vpon thy lippes (4. 13).*

He is then raised into the monument and we hear Cleopatra speak:

*Oh come, come, come,
They beaue Anthony aloft to Cleopatra
And welcome, welcome. Dye where³⁴ thou hast liu'd,
Quicken with kissing: had my lippes that power,
Thus would I weare them out.*

Before her own death, the queen kisses her attendants; Iras dies with that
kiss. The queen is anxious to follow her, for:

*If she first meete the Curled Anthony.
Hee'l make demand of her, and spend that kisse
Which is my heauen to haue.*

Next to the kisses are those gestures that have relation to Cleopatra's body.
Though the scene on the River Cydnus is only reported, its spell is cast over
the whole play. Cleopatra swoons whenever she has the whim to do so, as
e.g. in 1. 3. 15; soon after, she is seized by another fainting fit and she asks
her maid to "cut her laces". How painful the touch of her body may be,
becomes evident when she beats the poor messenger and almost kills him.
A. & C. was written after the year 1603; so it was not dangerous any lon-

³⁴ where] F1: when.

ger to "hold as 'twere) the Mirrour vp to nature"; soon after, however, Cleopatra is ashamed of her lack of self-control, when she looks at her hands:

*These hands do lacke Nobility, that they strike
A meaner than myselfe (2. 5).*

When she helps Antony to arm in the fourth act, she is a playful child. She buckles the straps of his armour in order to give him a symbol of the firm bond that clasps her and her lover together.

Her death, at last, has a touch of innocence in it, when she calls the fatal adder at her bosom the "Baby at my breaſt". The softness of her eye-lids still charms the attendant who closes them. It is echoed in the onomatopoeia of "downie windowes cloze", a sentence without a harsh sound; this sweetness—suit the action to the word!—was again expressed by a respective gesture. And Charmian seeks to touch the beloved body for the last time and also to give it the greatest majesty that was possible:

*your Crowne's awry*³⁵

Ile mend it, and then play—

There is the same tenderness in this farewell as in Horatio's "Goodnight ſweet Prince". Even in the last words of the play the body of dead Cleopatra acts and charms: the soldiers discover the stings of adders on her naked breast and arm; she lies there like a sleeper (and not like a corpse, as e.g. Titinius in J. C. 5. 3. 92):

ſhe lookes like ſleepe,

As ſhe would catch another Anthony

In her ſtrong toyle of Grace.

The movements of the hands are more frequently studied in A. & C. than in other plays; again and again, some person asks another: "let me have your hand(s)". The carousers (2. 7) grasp each other's hands and perform a wild round dance; at last they help one another to the shore. Antony heartily bids farewell to his servants and he shakes hands with each of them. A. & C. is the play of fellow-feeling, just as "Macbeth" feeds on antipathy.

Shakespeare carefully observes the hands of his personages: Eros trembles, when he assists his master in arming (A. & C. 4. 4). The words of Enobarbus: "But why, why, why—" demand gestures of impatience.

In Ham. we may list an extraordinary number of deictic gestures. The group this—that—here—there and the invitation to look at something occurs in hundreds of cases:

Looke where it comes againe 1. 1. 35; marke it Horatio ... see, it ſtalkes away ... but ſoft, behold: loe, where it comes againe 1. 1. 128; looke with what courteous action 1. 4. 58; but looke, the Morne in Ruſſet mantle clad 1. 1. 166; my father, me thinkes I ſee my father 1. 2. 185; looke my Lord, it

³⁵ Crowne's awry] F1: Crownes away.

comes 1.4.38; but looke where fadly the poor wretch / Comes reading 2.2.; this most excellent Canopy the Ayre, look you, this braue ore-hanging 2.2.306; that great Baby you see there 2.2.399; for looke where my Abridgements come (-ment comes) 2.2.447; do you see that Clowd? that's almost in shape like a Camell 3.2.393; looke heere vpon this Picture, and on this ... see what a grace was feated on his brow 3.4.54; but look, Amazement on thy Mother sits 3.4.111; look you how pale he glares ... do you see nothing there? ... looke how it steals away: 3.4; No, I deny that, for looke you sir, I stand here (Q₁, XVI); Looke you, there's another Horatio (Q₁ XVI, 44); Looke you, heres a scull ... Let me see (Q₁, XVI); marke yon water-flie (Q₁, XVIII, 5); loe, heere I lye 5.2.315, and others.

So the leitmotif seems to exist in gesticulation as well as in imagery.

In Oth., the gestures of brutality dominate. In the first scene of the play, that special tone of malice is already present, when Iago and Roderigo alarm old Brabantio; in 1.2.5. the same tang of mischief becomes more remarkable:

Iago: *Nine, or ten times*

I had thought t' haue jerk'd him here vnder the Ribbes.

Soon, the swords are drawn (55-88), but there are no fights yet. Only in the second act, the hostilities break out in the Cassio-Roderigo affair. Othello's honest heart hardens unnaturally, too (4.1.190): "No, my heart is turn'd to stone: I strike it, and it hurts my hand." His heart is even so hardened that he begins to strike his wife. The Elizabethan theatre was not exclusive and aristocratic in its taste. The Lord and the labourer attended the same performance and they both enjoyed it. The gesticulation must not, therefore, be expected to be that of Goethe or Racine. The popularity of Shakespeare's art induced gestures that would have repulsed a merely aristocratic society.

Iago's "jerk'd him here" is as odious and wily as another gesture of his, the stroke at Cassio's leg (5.1). To do justice to Iago, however, we must add that the modern editors all adopt a Theobaldean stage-direction, which was based on a passage in Shakespeare's source, Giovanbattista Giraldi Cinthio: "et gli dirizzò un colpo alle gambe, per farlo cadere." It is, therefore, not proved that the treacherous stab ever took place on the Elizabethan stage. Cassio's cry "I am maym'd for euer" gives no sufficient clue for the conjecture that it was Iago who executed the stroke. The later line "My Legge is cut in two" is already a safer proof of a stab from behind, and though it need not be Iago's work, this way of fighting an adversary is quite in his line.

In 5.2.46, Othello rolls his eyes in wild anger and a few lines later he sullenly gnaws his lips. The murder-scene, which follows immediately after, is only surpassed by the disgusting slaughter of Nancy by Bill Sikes in *Oliver Twist*. Iago finishes the number of his crimes by killing his own wife. Cruelty, irritation, and misanthropy are the moulds that form most of the gestures in Oth. The few friendly gestures only intensify the cruelty of the

rest. The only gesture that springs from a real feeling of perfect happiness is at once poisoned by one of Iago's remarks; after Othello's kiss (2. 1. 200), the rascally "friend" of Othello says: "Oh you are well tun'd now: But Ile fet downe the peggs that make this Muficke, as honest as I am."

Iago's satanic nature manifests itself in another gesture, which does not, however, proceed clearly from the text itself (1. 3. 308). Iago speaks to Roderigo about Desdemona and about Roderigo's despondency:

Rod.: *I will incontinently drowne myselfe.*

Iago: *If thou do'st, I shall neuer loue thee after. Why thou silly Gentleman.*

In the Furness Variorum Edition we find a gloss from Booth's Prompt-Book: "Tapping him playfully on the forehead." Roderigo is a fool in the eyes of Iago and he plays with him.

The actor who plays Macbeth has to cope with the difficulty that he has to show two Macbeths: one feeling guilty of his bloody deed, the other looking self-assured and gay. The parts of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth must be counted among the most difficult tasks for an actor. He has to insert into passages of robustious jolliness convulsive movements, shy looks, and nervous headshakes.

5. THE METRICAL BASIS OF GESTURES

The idea of adapting the metre to the action was not Shakespeare's.³⁶

There are numerous examples in ancient literature of the same artistic means. The hesitating prudence of Fabius Cunctator could be intimated in a line like "unus qui nobis cunctando restituis rem"; nervousness of action found its expression in the skipping accents of "sed fugit interea fugit irreparabile tempus".

In many cases, Shakespeare still directs or wants to direct the actions of his players by means of the metre.

When Cassius dies in J. C. 5. 3. 44 there is neither a hint at the movement of his sword nor a stage-direction. But there is a break when the suicide is committed. The caesura gives us the exact moment of his touching of the sword:

*Stand not to answer: Heere, take thou the Hilt,
And when my face is couer'd, as 'tis now*

³⁶ Nor is the discovery of the gestic quality of his language mine only. When I found my first examples in 1947, I did not yet know of an article by Richard Flatter in No. 3 of *The Dublin Magazine* (1939, September!): William Shakespeare the Actor. My disappointment at finding the foot-prints of an earlier explorer in what I regarded as an "undiscovered Country" was, at least, alleviated by the idea that this country was no *fata morgana*.

Guide thou the Sword – Caesar, thou art reueng'd

x | ẋ x | ẋ^|^|^ ẋu u | ẋ x | ẋ

Even with the Sword that kill'd thee.....

ẋ u u | ẋ x | ẋ x | ^|^|^|^|^

Another very close amalgamation of metre and gesture is effected by the rhythm of Cor. 5. 5. 129:

Cor.: *O that I had him,*

with six Auffidiusses, or more: His Tribe,

To vse my lawfull Sword. Auf.: Insolent Villaine.

x | ẋ x | ẋ x | ẋ ^ | ẋ u u | ẋ x | ^

The abruptness of the murder is clearly accentuated by the preceding interval, (^). Aufidius rises, draws, and is the first to stab Coriolanus. After the rest (^) the exclamation "insolent" sounds like the lash of a whip. It symbolizes at once the actions of jumping up and of striking with the dagger at Coriolanus. Or take Titania's line in M.N.D. 4. 4. 51:

O how I loue thee! how I dote on thee!

x | ẋ x | ẋ x | ^|^|^ ẋ x | ẋ x | ẋ

The sense-benumbing silliness of her blind love is skilfully cast into the movements intimated by the metre. Twice she fondles him, pressing him to her bosom.

King Lear (3. 2) in the storm is another performance on the same principle. "Blow windes &c." entirely breaks the metrical mould and escapes our means of rendering by symbols:

Blow windes, & crack your cheeks; Rage, blow

^ | ẋ x | ẋ x | ẋ ^ | ^ | ^
or: ^

He madly throws up his arms into the air with gestures of imprecation and despair. His diction is a tempest of consonants: sp (three times); st (twice); tch; sh; th; f; k (six times); ks. Thirty-two times, like invectives, we hear the pronoun "you". He threatens the elements with his fists. And when he comes to "a head / So old and white as this", he tears his hair. The actor seemingly has to be all out of his senses. The roots of the gestures go down to the very metre and the individual sounds of the passage. There is no reporter who tells us what the old man does; nor can he himself accompany his raving by contemplative remarks like "I am doing this, I am doing that". The metre itself, and the sounds of the words, manage the play.

The slightest gradations and shades in the music of the lines are of importance to the interpretation. In spite of the passionate whirlwind of the soliloquy, each word is carefully selected, each line cautiously composed. A juxtaposition of this passage with the beginning of the play (1. 1. 38 ff.) will show what is meant. Here we have the gesticulation of a good-natured, somewhat

whimsical, old country-gentleman, who orders the decline of his life with a certain ceremoniousness:

*Tell me my daughters
(Since now we will dine vs both of Rule,
Interest of Territory, Cares of State)
Which of you shall we say doth love vs most.*

Even the hard imperative of "the map there" in the Qq is softened to "Give me the map there" in the first Folio. How different from "rumble thy bell full" is the diction of "Tell me &c.". The intercalated causal adverb-clause suggests gestures of a similar fussiness and complicated loquacity.

A different atmosphere reigns in the cave of the dancing witches in Mac.. It is created by the introductory words of the three witches; it is intensified by the refrain, which reminds us of Old Germanic spells and which cannot be transposed into movement except by a bacchantic dance. The old four-beat verse of the Teutonic poems takes the place of the five iambs of blank verse and forms the horrible key-note of the roundelay:

*Double, double, toyle and trouble
Fire burne, and Cauldron bubble.*

The actual "recipe" of the magic is introduced by the line "round about the Cauldron go: ..." which clearly shows that the poet was actually thinking of a round dance. The magical effect of the metre in these lines is still the same as in Shakespeare's day and we cannot avoid the entrancing power of the stamping trochees [$\acute{x}x, \acute{x}x | \acute{x}x | \acute{x}x$], which is even intensified by the alliteration of the refrain [$d-d-t-t-b-b$]. The gestures of this passage are as evident as those in Horace's "Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero &c.".

In Much Ado, Antonio challenges Claudio and the Prince with the words:

Come follow me boy, come fir boy, come follow me (5.1.82)

$\acute{x} \quad | \quad \acute{x} \cup \quad \cup \quad | \quad \acute{x} \wedge || \quad \acute{x} \quad \times \quad | \quad \acute{x} \quad || \quad \acute{x} \quad | \quad \acute{x} \times \quad | \quad \acute{x}$

Trying to cram this into the regular metrical scheme would be a useless effort. But there are clearly three periods in this line, each standing for a fresh challenge. The ordinary editions have no stage-direction with this passage, though it is quite evident that both Leonato and Antonio draw their swords,—in any case the latter does. The inner metrical structure of the verse clearly corresponds to the challenging movements of a fencer, that tripping to and fro. The threefold repetition of "come" makes it rather provoking and adds to the scene that typical electricity of a challenge.

When the "Furious Tybalt" comes back to the stage, the equally infuriated Romeo challenges him with the words:

Either thou or I, or both, must goe with him (R. & J. 3.1.135)

$\cup \cup \quad | \quad \acute{x} \quad \times \quad | \quad \acute{x} \times \quad | \quad \acute{x} \quad \times \quad | \quad \acute{x} \quad \times \quad | \quad \acute{x}$

The last word of the preceding line was "companie" [$\acute{x}x | \acute{x}$]; the accented syllable meets with the unaccented beginning of (135), which has been

doubled. The musical effect of the line is rather bad and it is meant to be bad. It gives the action an aggressive trait as in the quotation from *Much Ado*. The double beat of with the additional clustering of ð : ð (either thou) again stands for the angry movement of the fencer at quart.

M.N.D. is full of metrical and gestic dainties. The gait of the fairy is suggested by the mere metre of 2. 1. 5 sq.:

- A { Ouer hil, ouer dale,
through³⁷ bufh, through³⁷ briar,
Ouer parke, ouer pale,
through³⁷ flood, through³⁷ fire, (I)
- B { I do wander euerie where,
fwiſter than the moones³⁸ ſphere;
And I ſerue the Fairy Queene (II)
- C { to dew her orbs vpon the green. (III)
The Cowſlips tall, her penſioners (*) bee, (IV)
In their gold coats, ſpots you ſee; (V)
- D { Thoſe be Rubies, Fairy fauors,
In thoſe freckles, liue their fauors, (VI)
- E { I muſt go ſeeke ſome dew drops heere,
And hang a pearle in euery (*) cowſlips eare. (VII)

I–VII are resting-places for the actor, at which he preserves his last gesture for a while, preparing to change his step. The double-beats (*) are preliminaries of the imminent change of rhythm; they are quick double-steps, followed by a prolonged gesture. The anapaests of A, the trochees of B and iambics of C are choreographic hints. From the dactyl of “euery” (*) in the last line the pace of the dancer obviously begins to slacken; at “eare” it probably dies away in a curtsey. After “ſauors” (VI) the little elf turns with a sudden jump or pirouette.

There is an undeniable metrical effect in the two lines 3. 67 and 3. 89 of the fourth act of *Taming*. Petruchio and his wife quarrel about the new cap the haberdasher has just brought. Especially Petruchio is mimicking a kind of blind madness and when he chooses from the man’s selection of caps, he tosses the bonnets up in an angry gesture and at last throws them away. He describes one of the caps as:

a walnut-shell,
A knacke, a toy, a babies cap.

³⁷ through] Qq: thorough; the phonetically correct form.

³⁸ the moones] F1: ye Moons [ðə ’mu:niz].

The accented syllables fall like beats: does he beat the cap on his partner's head or on the table? Neither is he satisfied with the gown:

Heers snip, and nip, and cut, and flish and flash.

There is incontestably a gestic effect in the closing vowels of "fish" and "flash"; there is a to and fro in the alternation of i and a (or: o), as in tick-tack, shilly-shally, ping-pong &c. And there is, moreover, the hard whipping metre:

× | × × | × × | × × | × × | × ^ | ^

Soon after, he actually begins to threaten the tailor:

Oh monstrous arrogance:

Thou lyesst, thou thred, thou thimble,

Thou yard three quarters, half yard, quarter, naile,

Thou Flea, thou Nit, thou winter cricket thou.

The repetition of "thou" and the fragmentary line "thou thimble" give us again the impression that the actor is beating his tailor.

Every movement of the language is accompanied by one of the body; they exactly correspond to each other. There are movements of the whole body connected with those of the organs of speech³⁹. Shakespeare consciously and unconsciously makes use of this principle and he guides the actor's gestures by means of the metrical structure of his verse. Not throughout the whole play—but in its decisive moments.

Such a climax is the moment after the murder of Desdemona (5.2.188), when Emilia unmasks Iago's villany to Othello:

Mont.: *O monstrous Acte.*

Emil.: *Villany, villany, villany:*

I thinke vpon't, I thinke: I smel't: o Villany.

The two lines are not quite metrical any more. The accent of "Acte" hurts that of "Villany"; and the threefold „villany“ is mere anarchy of verse. What does Emilia do? She screams, trembles, and shudders at what has happened and is yet full of a savage energy. She cries the first "villany" immediately after the sentence of Montano, leaving no interval after "Acte".

When important personages die, the line is interrupted without being continued by the next speaker:

Cleop.: *What should I stay—* (A. & C. 5.2.315) or ib.

Charm.: *Ab Souldier* (A. & C. 5.2.329).

When Lear dies (5.3.313), the line is completed, but when Edgar finishes the line, the metre changes from trochees to iambs, which gives the impression of an interruption.

³⁹ This is, in a few words, Eduard Sievers's theory of sound analysis. The result of my investigations could not be formulated more adequately. (Cf. Festschrift für Wilhelm Streitberg, Heidelberg 1924, p. 65 sq.: Ziele und Wege der Schallanalyse, by Eduard Sievers).

Lear: *Looke there, looke there.*

He dies ⁴⁰

× × | × × ||

Edg. *He faints, my Lord, my Lord.*

× | × ^ || × | × ^ | × ^

One may object that my interpretation of this line is not verse any longer. But was there ever an actor who spoke this line in the common up and down of iambs and trochees?

Look there, look there. — He faints, my Lord, my Lord.

U ^ | U ^ | U ^ | U ^ | U ^

The poet after the metrical experience of a few thousand lines no longer counted syllables nor scanned his verses: he suited the metre to the action and distributed the ups and downs according to the emotional value of the line, while his metrical subconsciousness told him, whether the line was full or not. He suited the action to the word as a stage-manager, and the metre to the action as a poet.

Laertes dies with the words: "Nor thine on me." Hamlet begins a new line. The actor of the Hamlet part gains four beats, in which he can either silently look at Laertes or give him a sign. His voice fails for a moment and when he begins his farewell-line to Laertes, his friend is dead already.

× | × × | × ^ | ^ ^ | ^ ^ | ^ ^ | ^

Lady Macduff's son ends the scene with the quite unmetrical cry:

Run away, I pray you.

× × | × × | × ×

or rather U U | ×.U | × U ^ | ^

Caesar's death-line gives an impression of shortness of breath and of agony:

Et Tu Brutè? — Then fall Caesar.

× | ^ | × × | ^ || × | ^ | × × | ^

"fall" (^) already accompanies the fall of Caesar before the Statue of Pompey. Cassius' line: "Euen with the Sword that kill'd thee", is unfinished.

The death of Coriolanus has been discussed above. His last word is a halved line, followed by an inversion of the metre.

Metrical examination of a text may be a help for the critical reconstruction of the original wording; as in Ham. 1.5:

My Tables, my Tables; meet it is I set it downe ...

That one may smile, and smile and be a villain;

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmarke;

So Vnckle, there you are: now to my word; ...

The Quartos have "My Tables,—meet ... &c.", which was accepted by the editors of modern texts. But I am convinced that the repetition of "my

⁴⁰ dies] F1: dis.

tables" represents the correct Shakespearean text though the metre is broken; it must be broken to make a stage-direction:

My Tables, my Tables; meet it is I set it downe

× | × ∪ ∪ | × ∪ ∧ | × × | × × | × × | ×

The irregularity—or rather the unrest—of the first three bars, with their quavers instead of crotchets, gives an exact picture of Hamlet's fumbling in his pocket in order to produce his tables. After "there you are" we have the same phenomenon: a crotchet rest indicates the moment at which Hamlet thrusts his tables back into his pocket:

So Vnckle, there you are: now to my word.

× | × × | × × | × ∧ | × ∪ ∪ | × ∧ | ∧

6. SHAKESPEARE'S GESTIC STYLE

The more than two centuries of Shakespearean criticism have not sufficed to classify the poet in one of the categories of literary chronology. To some he seems typically baroque, to others he represents the Flowering of the Renascence; others admit that he cannot be classified at all, which is the case with some of the greatest geniuses.

In Des Granges' French Literature⁴¹ we read: "En un mot, Molière n'a pas de style, il a autant de styles que de personnages différents" (p. 540). Or shall we quote St. John Ervine on O'Neill's plays: "Mr. O'Neill seems in each new play that he produces, to be making a fresh experiment." (Introduction to *The Moon of the Caribbees* &c., Jonathan Cape, London, 1942, p. 10).

Shakespeare must be reckoned among those lifelong experimenters. His style cannot be labelled with any of the familiar technical terms; it varies from epoch to epoch of his production in an indefatigable struggle for improvement, the different phases being very short and with many dissolving transitions. Some of the gestures will appear very early and reappear in Oth. and J.C.. Therefore, we must not expect to extract or extort a formula for a Shakespearean play from the Shakespearean canon. We may, though with some difficulty, work out a recipe for an Elizabethan sonnet, because it is the product of a much shorter epoch.

All this may be applied to the gestic style, too. If a dramatist's speaking or thinking is subject to certain laws, why should he not, though unconsciously, regulate the usage of his gestures? Gestic style is the resultant of the quality of the single gestures; their relation to the word or to other gestures; the quantity of gestures per scene, act, or play; and that gestic key-note typical of either tragedy or comedy or of a dramatic character.

⁴¹ Ch.-M. Des Granges, *Histoire de la littérature française*, 1940, Paris, p. 540.

The quality of gestures obviously improves in the course of Shakespeare's dramatic career: mass-slaughter is gradually replaced by the deaths of some choice victims; the relations of gestures to each other have been studied in our chapter on the syntax of gestures. The quantity of gestures is also an important stylistic element: Caesar's murder impresses us much more than all the crimes in *H. VI* or in *Titus*; and not only because it is Brutus who slays Caesar (i.e. because of the quality or intensity of the act), but because the surroundings are free of murder. The whole frame of the play reposes on the symmetry of the two important deaths of Caesar and Brutus.

Shakespeare only gradually discovered the tricks of his trade; one example (before we proceed to examine his first period of working more closely) may illustrate this assertion: in either *M. W. W.* or *Much Ado* he discovers the possibility of what we might call the "characterization *in contumaciam*", in which the actor is described when absent from the stage. This generally happens before we see him for the first time or before he appears with a changed behaviour. The curiosity of the audience is roused and will be concentrated on the person who is going to enter. In *M. W. W.* (1. 4. 29), Slender, whom we have heard and seen on the stage before, is characterized long after his first appearance: "Do's he not hold vp his head / (as it were?) and strut in his gate?" Though this description follows the actor's appearance on the stage, it must nevertheless be reckoned with by the player. In the same year (ca. 1599) we find the following stage-direction in *Much Ado*; it describes what has preceded as well as what follows: "How tartly that Gentleman lookes, I neuer can see him but I am heartburn'd an hovvre after."

This remark casts a light upon the mode of acting of those days: exaggeration in gesture and mimical expression were required from a comedian. Everything had to be obvious and transparent to the spectator. Through the whole play, Don John looks exceedingly sour, so that as soon as he appears on the stage, the audience remembered what it had to expect from him. In *J. C.*, presumably the next play, Brutus exhorts the plotters to "looke fresh and merrily"; similar advice may be found in *Macbeth*. These examples are clearly prognostic; the actors, who are supposed to be excited to an extraordinary degree, have to play harmless citizens and friends of Caesar, they are indeed as jolly good fellows as they ever were before. They will even "tafte some wine with him". And they are again characterized in Caesar's prognostic dream as "many lusty Romans", who come smiling to bathe their hands in Caesar's blood.

Another variety of "*in contumaciam*", the description of psychological species (in this case of the lover) appears in *As You* (3. 2. 359); it coincides in its main features with the one in *Ham.* (Hamlet in Ophelia's "closet"), though in the latter case it is a portrait of Hamlet only. The same year (1600) brings a description of Malvolio (*Tw. N.*) and his affected doings. The plan is first

conceived by Maria,⁴² then expanded in the letter,⁴³ discussed by the eaves-droppers,⁴⁴ executed by Malvolio,⁴⁵ and mentioned twice⁴⁶ towards the end of the play. Thus Malvolio's gestures both when we actually see them and when they are discussed later on in the play, run through it like a gestic leitmotif; they are given more importance than any such joke in another play. It was obviously the joke of that comedy. Malvolio's phantastic smiles and his general demeanour must have been the talk of the town while the play was acted.—In T. & C. (1602) we find several persons described by others; before Diomedes appears on the stage (4. 5), Ulysses gives a psychological interpretation of his gait.

Vli.: 'Tis he, I ken the manner of his gate,

He rises on the toe: that spirit of his

In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

The poet here identifies the movement of the soul with that of the body. Shakespeare's interest in other people's manner of walking has been mentioned above (p. 25); it wants some further illustration here. In the Rape of Lucrece, we find a passage of great psychological interest (l. 1506 sq.): "In him the painter labour'd with his skill / to hide deceit, and give the harmless show, / An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still, / A brow unbent that seem'd to welcome woe &c." In the Tempest (4. 102), Ceres knows the approaching Juno by her gait. In M. W. W. the author alludes to a woman's gait in a "femi-circled Farthingale" (3. 3. 68). A perfect lover will not only observe his girl's hand, foot, face, eye, but also her gait (L. L. L. 4. 3. 185 sq.). Don Adriano's gait (L. L. L. 5. 1. 12) is majestic. The "swimming gate" of a pregnant woman is rather a curiosity even among Shakespeare's rich material: "Which (i.e. the passing of the sailing-boats on the sea) she with pretty and with swimming gate, ... Would imitate, and faile vpon the Land &c." (M. N. D. 2. 1. 130). Shakespeare's boy actors were able to "vsurpe the grace, / voice, gate, and action of a Gentlewoman" (Taming Ind. 132). The travelling "pedant" in 4. 2. 65 of the same play was in gait and countenance like a father. The courtiers of All's Well (2. 1. 56) wear themselves in the cap of time and "there do muster true gate". Autolycus assumes the gait of the courtiers (Hath not my gate in it, the measure of the Court? W. T. 4. 3. 759). Of Percy Hotspur it is said that he was imitated by all the young noblemen of his time:

He had no Legges, that practic'd not his Gate:

And speaking thicke ...

Became the Accents of the Valiant. (2 H. IV 2. 23 sq.)

⁴² 2. 3. 170.

⁴³ 2. 5. 168/198.

⁴⁴ ib. 218.

⁴⁵ 3. 4. 1-62. ⁴⁶ 5. 1. 348, ib. 360.

and l. 28:

*So that in Speech, in Gate,
In Diet, in Affections of delight ... &c.
He was the Marke, and Glasse, Coppy, and Booke,
That fashion'd others.*

Jack Cade (2 H. VI 3. 1. 372) is said to resemble in face, gait, and speech to Mortimer. Some of the players of the Globe or of Shakespeare's day must have had neither the accent nor the gait of a Christian (they strutted!) (Ham. 3. 2. 35). King Lear's "very gate did prophecie / A royall Noblenesse ... &c.". The same year brings Ham., in which several cases of preparatory description of absent persons are given. The most striking example in Ham. is the description of Ophelia's madness (4. 5), which is soon after confirmed by her own appearance.

a) Shakespeare's Early Plays

F. Madan, in Craig's Oxford Edition of the plays, speaks of the years between 1590 and 1593 as "years of experiment". But Shakespeare's years of experiment end with his production. "Years of dependency" we ought to call his beginnings: there was Seneca, there was the mediaeval stage, there was the *commedia dell'arte*, which came to Britain in 1576 and must have been known to him, and there were the dramatic entertainments at the English Court. The poet already showed a fine sense of dramatic grandeur: but he shared that sense of rhetoric and dignity of gestures with the rest of his age. But even the early Shakespeare is not merely rhetorical.

Cruelty and bloodshed dominated the tragedy of the nineties, and young Shakespeare did not despise them. In Thomas Preston's *Cambyeses* we find the following advice to the hangman:

*So done, draw thou his cursed skin
Straight over both his ears.
I will see this office done,
And that before mine eyes.*

A stage-direction completes that gloomy woodcut:

"(Smite him in the neck with a sword to signify his death.)"

The word "signify" seems to indicate that both the poet and his audience were fully conscious of the illusory character of what was going on on the stage (in which they differed from the modern cinema-goers). *Cambyeses* was known to Shakespeare and left its traces in Titus and H. VI, in both of which people are killed on the stage:

Soul.: *Iacke Cade, Iacke Cade.*

Cade.: *Knocke him down there. [They kill him.]* (2 H. VI 4. 6. 8)

In all three parts of H. VI we meet with the formula "take that", generally accompanied by the stage-direction ("stabs him"). Thus, the gestic material of the early Shakespearean thrillers is meant to satisfy the "heartly appetites" (G. B. Harrison) of the ordinary audience in Shakespeare's time. In a later play, "here's for" might stand for a gesture of tipping a messenger: in the early plays it stands for homicide. Those references may be cumulated as in 3 H. VI 1. 4. 175. Words and gestures are combined in a very impressive way as in 1. 3. 47 of the same play (murder of young Rutland):

No cause? thy Father slew my Father: therefore dye.

Clifford uses his dagger when he pronounces the last words of the sentence; the comparison with the passage in *Cambyzes* shows Shakespeare superior to Preston, who explains everything by means of a stage-direction. The cruelty of the gestures in the first plays often lies in the very contrast of word and gesture ("take that" instead of "die"). Shakespeare's audience must have consisted of experts in gruesome actions; they could distinguish between a public hangman who was up to the mark and one who was not. Bear-baiting and cock-fighting were entertainments at which blood was shed, and blood, therefore, was asked for on the stage, too.—In 3 H. VI, the beginning of the first act leads, after a few lines, to a climax for the audience in the pit. Each of the three sons of Plantagenet produces a trophy from the preceding battle:

Edw.: I cleft his Beauer with a down-right blow:

That this is true (Father) behold his blood.

Mount.: And Brother, here's the Earle of Wiltshires blood ...

to which Richard adds:

Speake thou for me, and tell them what I did.

In 3 H. VI 1. 4. 156, blood is washed out of a piece of cloth with tears. In R. III, the king "layes his breft open, he offers at with his sword" (a stage-direction, 1. 2. 179). R. & J. is still full of riots and rows. Already in the first scene there is a lively scene with "clubs, bills, and partizans". The audience must have pricked up their ears at the sound of swords, and the very movement towards the sword-hilt must have been delightful to them. Mercutio's and Tybalt's deaths are good examples of Elizabethan fencing scenes; they occupy 3. 1, a place which will later on (in Ham. e.g.) be taken by the soliloquies. Ere he dies, Mercutio gives us the details necessary for the actors: "I was hurt under your arme". The passage shows how minutely Shakespeare plans every little movement in this play already; his vision of what will be on the stage finds its expression in the text. Romeo intervenes and tries to part them, when Tybalt suddenly attacks and, with a quick movement underneath Romeo's arm, hurts Mercutio. Towards the end of R. & J., the sensational incidents increase in number.

As far as that kind of gestures is concerned, Shakespeare is by no means superior to Kyd or Marlowe; and such gestures and incidents may even be

found in his later plays. But in the latter they have become incidents and are counterbalanced by what we appreciate as Shakespeare's best art. In the early plays, however, there are only first sprinklings of Shakespeare's genius among very feeble gestic inventions.

Mockery is another element of great importance in Elizabethan and early Shakespearean drama. The points are again very tangible and the least intelligent spectator could easily follow. I shall content myself with giving some few examples: Richard, the Duke of York, sitting on the molehill (3 H. VI 1.4.67); Queen Mary's pleasure in making fun of him. In the latter case, the sneers are actually diabolical; the more so because the cruelties are gradually intensified. The whole process is very complicated in its psychology:

1. York is placed on a mole-hill. The "joke" is at the same time a symbol ("he raught at Mountains").
2. The queen proffers the napkin which had been dipped in the blood of York's son; it remains, however, uncertain when the queen hands it to York.
3. When York still remains quiet, the queen bids him grieve to make her merry.
4. The paper-crown is produced.
5. At "off with the crown", the paper-diadem is possibly knocked off.
6. York makes his "orizon" and actually begins to weep.
(It is no accident that Greene remembers the passage "Oh Tygres Heart" when he mentions Shakespeare; the scene must have been highly impressive.)
7. With his tears, York symbolically washes the napkin.
8. He then gives the napkin back ("keep thou the napkin"). It is not easy to say what York does when he asks the queen to take the crown (and with the crown his head!) Does he kick it away after it has been knocked off?
9. The pitiless scoffing ends with the stabbing of York. The phrases "heere's for" (twice) and "heere's to" indicate the moment of the action.

The scene in which the queen scoffs at the Duke is supported by actions throughout; it is more spectacular, therefore, than what we find in the more verbal humour of the comedies. The molehill and the paper-crown recall the trial of Jesus before Pilate. Bullying and mocking are clearly expressed by the more outward means of the gesture or the handling of things; the latter cannot quite be separated from the following ingredient of theatrical craftsmanship, from symbolism.

The medieval stage was not particularly rich in stage-property. Its only ambition was, therefore, to give some hints as to the milieu and the place in which the scene was going to happen. It even succeeded in making an excellent virtue of necessity: it developed, influenced by medieval art as a whole, its typically symbolistic style, to which some modern producers and drama-

tists want to return. The duke of York on his molehill, the picking of the flowers in the Temple Garden, with its strict parallelism, the ghost-scene in R. III, the smashing of the mirror in R. II are instances of symbolism in Shakespeare's early gesticulation. They may appear again years later as is the case with 3 H. VI 3.1.84:

*Looke, as I blow this Feather from my Face,
And as the Ayre blows it to me againe,
Obeying with my winde when I do blow,
And yielding to another, when it blowes,
Commanded alwayes by the greater gust:
Such is the lightnesse of you, common men.*

This metaphor will appear again in Oth. in a much more concentrated form; the somewhat pedantic simile will have developed into a symbol:

*Look here, Iago,
All my fond loue, thus do I blow to heauen,—tis gone* (Oth. 3.3.445).

Parallelism, symmetry, repetition are again and again used in Shakespeare's early plays. They take their origin in the medieval stage on the one hand, in the Latin drama on the other. The symmetrical structure of the classical stage with its chorus divided into two groups seems to survive in Shakespeare. Stage-symmetry always adds a certain stiffness to a play, but at the same time it detaches it from everyday reality and raises it to a higher level. If two or several persons subsequently execute the same action, we obtain a kind of rhythm and gradation. A good example is L.L.L. 4.3: Four actors, one after the other, enter upon the stage, carrying one or many papers in their hands. Thus the gestic subject is the same for all four, but its execution varies according to the different temperaments: Berowne, the melancholiac; Longaville, the choleric; Dumaine, the sanguine. "Here is part of my Rime" is clear: Berowne holds the sheet with his verses on it. But what did he do at: "and heere my mallicholie"? We may suppose that he crossed his arms over his breast, as the stage-melancholiacs used to do. The Euphuistic symmetry of the preceding sentence necessarily leads to this gesture:

*it (i.e. Love) hath taught mee to Rime, and to be mallicholie:
and here is part of my Rime, and here is my mallicholie.*

By commenting on his demonstration of melancholia, he at the same time ridicules it.—The king is much more solemn and sedate in his behaviour. Between "Ay mee!" and his long speech he inserts some gestures, then he begins to read his super-sonnet of sixteen lines (Craig prints it as such; the F₁-text has the speech: "So sweet ... Who is he comes heere?" in ordinary print, as if it were one soliloquy; I propose to keep the italics as far as "weep". The sonnet is practically at an end, and "O Queen of Queenes" is merely an additional sigh of the king, introducing the question: "How shall she know my griefes?".)

Longaville puts up another gestic puzzle to us. The editors have him enter with a paper; the F_1 has no respective stage-direction, but line 48 clearly expresses the fact that he is "wearing papers". The subsequent text confirms that:

I feare these stubborn lines lack power to mouwe ...

(he is not satisfied with one, or several, of the poems that he is perusing).

These numbers will I teare and write in prose.

He actually does so, which Berowne up in his tree paraphrases with:

O Rimes are gards on wanton Cupids bofe,

Disfigure not his slops.⁴⁷

In the meantime, one of the sonnets has caught his fancy, and he begins to read. While he still wonders by whom he shall send the poem, Dumaine enters. He has a paper, and says:

Once more Ile read the Ode that I haue writ.

and after the perusal he continues:

This will I send, and something else more plaine.

The effect of that scene is undoubtedly rooted in the repetition of one action, the reading of a poem on love from a sheet of paper. As a single act it would not strike the spectator—nor would the Globe roar with laughter, if the actors were mere speakers. The effect produced by this repetition is farcical and it is an old popular tradition that we can trace back to medieval comedy and, in some respects, to the fairy tale and the ballad tradition. If we reduce it to a formula, we get: Different persons do the same action with a slight distinguishing trait; the repetition culminates in an explosion.

If two actors do the same thing we may speak of parallelism, which is another element of the early plays. Richard's and Richmond's tents are pitched at the same time on the stage. Richard three times exhorts his soldiers to do their work (R. III 5. 3):

Here pitch our Tent,

Vp with my Tent,

Vp with the Tent.

Richmond's tent is pitched without one word from the earl; it is silently constructed, which seems to be indicative of his personality and of his quality as a leader; Richard, whose star is sinking, has to care about the work himself, while his adversary, with the natural easiness of the coming sovereign, enters his when it is already finished. We may even suppose that the former has to speak three times, because his workers are reluctant or even sluggish while Richmond's crew works in silent dexterity. But the parallelism continues: Richmond wants some "Inke and Paper" to be brought to his tent, with which we possibly see him sketch his plan of the battle before

⁴⁷ slops] F_1 : Shop.

his dialogue with Derby. He must have been writing before, for he hands Blunt a letter for Lord Stanley. Richard also asks for ink and paper. All his gestures and words betray the precariousness of his situation. He asks for a "Boule of Wine" and again has to ask twice. We cannot tell how the actor who was to fetch the cup and to fill it behaved, but we may again suppose that he did not do it quickly enough, which provokes a half angry, half anxious irritation of the king. His movements are obviously nervous and hasty, he is constantly looking around him. Before he enters the tent, he asks a second time: "Is Inke and Paper ready?" His final word: "Leave me I say" requires a tired and impatient movement.

Richmond ends his day with a prayer; we may suppose that he knelt down like Claudius in Ham..

The Ghost's appearance in the following scene makes the symmetry perfect. Richard's behaviour, when he wakes up, is again a proof of his guilt: he probably jumps up from his couch at the words "Give me another horse, bind up my Wounds. Cold feareful drops stand on my trembling flesh". He touches his forehead to wipe them off, his limbs trembling a little. He looks around him if there is a murderer. Richmond rises and makes his oration to the soldiers. Richard asks for a calendar (gestures of looking it up and starting at the sight of his discovery): "by the Booke / He (i.e. the sun) should haue brau'd the East an hour ago", losing even in strength at the words "A Blacke day will it be to somebody". A last proof of his nervousness lies in the words: "Come bustle, bustle." Then follows the battle in which Richard at last acquires some grandeur: he leaves the stage as a fighter; the sixth "Richmond" is his last and most dangerous adversary and overcomes him: they leave the stage mutely, actions and gestures being the last impressions we get of them. They may have been distinguished by their respective technique of fighting, but this is mere conjecture.

In a similar way the poet contrasts the adversaries by opposing them in 1 H. VI (2. 3) in the Temple Garden.

The strongest parallelism of gestures and of the general behaviour is, of course, to be found in C. of E. in which the whole plot is based on the symmetry of the dramatis personae. The symmetry is maintained throughout the whole play and it culminates in the last speeches:

E.Dro.: *Will you walke in to see their gossiping?*

S. Dro.: *Not I sir, you are my elder.*

E.Dro.: *That's a question ... &c.*

E.Dro.: *Nay then thus:*

We came into the world like brother and brother:

And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

Similar cases of parallelism, symmetry, and intensification of gestures through repetition may be found throughout Shakespeare's early plays. One of the

most striking examples is the perfectly symmetrical scene in 3 H. VI 5. 53. The king has just finished his soliloquy—there must be a connection between the piling up of congruent lines with their hypnotising monotony and the use of the same or similar gestures—when a son enters, who has killed his father and a father who has killed his son. They both appear at the same time, carrying their respective victims on their arms. And their gestures are almost perfectly congruent. They enter, they begin to search their enemies, they discover whom they have slain (“Who’s this? Oh God! / But let me see ...”), and they begin to lament him. The king sits between the two and, like the chorus in an opera, summarizes the lamentations of his two fellow-players. The three form a quasi geometrical triad with a precise mechanism of gestures. The play becomes almost ritualistic, the movements are reduced to the simplest gestic elements.

There is a similar structure in 3 H. VI, 1.4. 175, when York is stabbed:
Cliff.: *Heere’s for my Oath, heere’s for my Father’s Death.*

Queene: *And heere’s to right our gentle hearted King.*

In the same play, when Prince Edward is killed (5.5.36), we have three thrusts again. King Henry is equally dispatched by three stabs, the first being introduced by a metrical break, which gives a special emphasis to “die”:

Ile heare no more:

Dye Prophet in thy speech,

× | × × | × ∧ | × ∧ | × × | × × | ×

Shakespeare must have been, either half or fully, conscious of such metrical possibilities, for he breaks the line after “more”. The second and the third stabbing take place at: *Down, down to hell* (cf. *dead for a Ducate, dead.*)⁴⁸

Iteration of gestures (trebling!) may also have a comical effect, approaching the ballet, as in L. L. L. 4. 3. 299/320:⁴⁹

“For when would you my Lord, or you, or you”, which is slightly changed into “For when would you (my Leege) or you, or you?”

In the same play, Don Armado and Berowne are characterized by their way of tipping Costard:

⁴⁸ Shakespeare does not only suit the word but also the sound to the action. Stabbing and killing are generally expressed by words beginning with d, t or th (“take *that*”, “*there’s* for”, “*die*”, “*down*”, “*dead for a Ducate*”), the examples could be multiplied, e.g. by Oth. 5. 1. 23.

Rod.: ... Villaine thou *dye’st*. Cas.: *That thrust had been mine enemy indeed, But that my Coate is better than thou know’st.* I will make proove of *thine*. “Thine” is evidently the counterpart to “die”; both words indicate the point at which the speakers thrust at their enemies.

⁴⁹ Cf. p. 85.

"Beare this significant to the countrey Maide *Iaquenetta*: there is remuneration, for the best ward of mine honours is rewarding my dependants, Moth, follow",—which sounds very supercilious and gestures of contempt and a haughty face must have accompanied the speech. Berowne's "Ther's thy guerdon: goe" is simple, and even blunt.

Different personages may be connected and yet contrasted by the various significances given to one and the same gesture. Three persons in 2 H. VI kneel down to be knighted: the treacherous Suffolk (1. 1. 64); Jack Cade, who knights himself (4. 2. 133); and the humble servant of the king, Iden (5. 1. 78). In 1 H. VI, Mortimer's death in prison is contrasted with Bedford's death in the battle; they both die in a chair (2. 5; 3. 2).

The two Talbots⁵⁰ embrace in death; by that final gesture all their feats are summed up, and their unity in life and death is demonstrated.

In the last two lines of L. L. L. we have a gesture of dividing the world—the stage—into two halves; and in the finale of the C. of E., the twins enter the house after a life of separation.

A last case of symmetry of stage and gestures will be the opening-scene in Titus: The apparition of Marcus Andronicus "aloft" (i. e. on the balcony of the tiring-house) with the aspirants to the throne on either side of the lower stage is typically Roman or medieval. A thesis written in Greifswald in 1927 (Walther Müller, *Der schauspielerische Stil im Passionsspiel des Mittelalters*), clearly demonstrates the way of the modern drama as developing out of the medieval Easter-play. The beginnings were highly stylized and choric („feierlich und ernst, stark chorisch ... es fehlt noch jedes individuelle dramatische Erleben ... ruhig, erhaben ... streng stilisiert“). In the beginning of Titus the dominant vision of the poet consists in the strong symmetry in the distribution of the actors and in a minimum of gestures. If we run through the first seventy lines of the play, we cannot find one gesture and we may suppose that what the players offered was medieval rhetoric. If we divest the speeches of their contents and only look at the general movement of the play, we are astonished to discover in Titus 1. 1. the structure of the medieval Ludus Paschalis, Marcus Andronicus corresponding to the Angel and the two pretenders to the crown taking the place of the visiting Maries. Walther Müller may again be quoted: „Wir sahen, dass hier ein Wechselgesang stattfindet, der keinerlei Möglichkeit zur Entfaltung einer lebenswahren Deklamation und Mimik bietet; höchstens war eine geringe Gesticulation möglich.“

A last feature of the stage-technique of Shakespeare's early plays is pathos: Hamlet's criticism of the usual style of acting is at the same time Shakespeare's retrospect to his beginnings and the rhetorical style of his early days:

⁵⁰ Provided that we may take 1 H. VI as Shakespeare's production.

do not saw the Ayre too much (sc. with) *your hand thus, but vse all gently.* 3.3. Medieval rhetoric—based on that of Latin antiquity—had had its stock of type-gestures for different occasions and part of these gestures had passed to the stage. The early Elizabethan stage had delighted in sublime or in thundering speeches. As the speeches offered practically no basis for gesture, no hints as to what the actor might do, there was practically no other way of accompanying them than by “sawing the air”. Shakespeare’s way as an artist led away from rhetorical tirades towards a “natural” (though not naturalistic) text, the words of which might easily be transformed into gestures. The early plays are full of magnificent soliloquies in which we scarcely find an allusion to gestic business. If we compare a soliloquy in R. III (e.g. 1.1.1 sqq.) with one in Mac. (e.g. 1.5.39 the Rauen himselfe), we can see that even the monologue was capable of development. In the R. III soliloquies we have not a single hint at what the player might do: as we cannot suppose that he stood there like a statue, we have to suppose that a series of rather vague movements of the arms accompanied his words. However, I should simplify the facts, if I posited a complete absence of the rhetorical element in Shakespeare’s later plays; but the more he improved his gestic style, the more he removed the remains of Latin rhetorical pathos from his plays. A grand pathetical movement like “this arm” (e.g. 3 H. VI 3.3.106–107: “while Life vpholds this Arme, / This Arme vpholds the House of Lancaſter”) is evidently ironical in the speech of the tawnie Moore in M. of V. (1.3): “By this Symitare ... That flew ... that won &c.”

Medieval and Senecan elements are mixed up in Shakespeare’s early plays in such a degree that it is hardly possible to detach them satisfactorily from each other. But in his early productions, already, we find the buds of his later skill and art.

b) King Leir and King Lear

A good method of demonstrating Shakespeare’s gestic peculiarities is that of comparison: we may juxtapose works of his early years with those of his mature epoch or we may compare a late play with its pre-Shakespearean pattern. The following section seeks to show, for a few scenes only, what Shakespeare made of the anonymous *King Leir*, which had first been acted in 1594 and which was printed in 1605.

The first scenes of the first act already guide us into two worlds of dramatic art. *Leir* begins with long and rather tiresome speeches in which we find no indication of what the actor is supposed to do. The 93 lines of the first scene do not imply one single movement; on the other hand the text abundantly uses the ordinary imagery of the day as when *Leir* speaks of his three daughters and how much they are

*Left as it were a ship without a sterne,
Or filly sheepe without a Pastors care.*

He also supposes that the soule of his "deceast and dearest Queen" "doth ride in triumph 'mōgst the Cherubins". The daughters are later addressed as the "florishing branches of a Kingly stocke, / Sprung from a tree that once did flourish greene, / Whose blossomes now are nipt with Winters frost". In line 75, King Leir announces:

*I am resolu'd, and euen now my mind
Doth meditate a sudden stratagem,
To try which of my daughters loues me best.*

But nothing sudden whatever happens, nor anything at all. We then run through the second scene which contains no hint of gestures either. The third scene, at last, shows Leir asking his daughters the fatal question. But though the speeches are most remarkable, the stage-business is rather monotonous. The stress lies, as in the first scene, on the grand, solemn diction:

*Do you loue vs, as euery child doth loue
Their father? True indeed, as some,
Who by disobedience short their fathers dayes,
And so would you: some are so father-fick,
That they make meanes to rid them from the world;
And so would you: some are indifferent,
Whether their aged parents liue or dye;
And so are you: ... (1.3.90 sqq.).*

For the audience and for the anonymous poet, the word still prevailed over the action: the amalgamation of fine speeches with dexterously inserted gestures was, as will be shown, Shakespeare's innovation.

Shakespeare does not begin his Lear with a long and melancholy speech; Kent and Gloucester discuss Lear's plans and Kent addresses the bastard Edmund with a deictic gesture. When Lear enters, the action is soon moving. Gloucester is told to attend the foreign princes and he makes his exit with a bow. Lear begins to express his "darker purposes". When the map is brought and when the daughters have answered, he points at the territories that he means to give his flattering daughters.

I Of all these bonds euen from this line to this.

II This ample third of our faire kingdome.

It is uncertain whether the part allotted to Cordelia is circumscribed by the movements of Lear's forefinger, as is certainly the case with the first two quotations. The natural flow of gestures is frozen by Cordelia's "Nothing".

Then Kent interferes and the originally quiet scene becomes more and more dramatic: "Come not betweene the Dragon and his wrath" *may* be accompanied by gestures,—“Out of my fight” certainly *is*. With the latter,

the first climax of the first scene is reached; the banishment of Cordelia "Hence and avoid my sight" being the second. Lear's choleric and hysterical nature (quite in contrast to that of his ancestor Leir) becomes manifest. There is also a symbolical action which must not be overlooked: "This Coronet part betweene you." Did he actually break a crown in two or did he simply hand it to one of them and expect them to halve the corresponding territories?

If we look back at the first scenes, we may say that by introducing the map, Shakespeare shortens the speeches and gives the scene its theatrical action. Lear is characterized in the first scene of Shakespeare's play as being on the verge of insanity, into which he glides later: at the climax of the first scene he reveals his paranoiac disposition which suspects movements of rebellion where all stand motionless. There is a parallel scene in the same play 4.4:

I, every inch a King.

When I do stare, see how the subject quakes,

where the "quaking" of a subject is mere imagination. In Leir, the quarrel between the king and Goneril is not characterized by any gestures that might be derived from the text. In Lear, as soon as Goneril appears (1.4. 207), the king exclaims: "How now, daughter, what makes that Frontlet on, Methinks you are too much alate i' th frowne."

When Leir sits down to weep, Lear goes through one of his fits of choler and despair while he beats his head with the words:

O Lear, Lear! beat at this gate that let

thy folly in and thy dear judgement out.

All that is madness in Lear is Shakespeare's addition; his sources know nothing of it; irony and desperate cynicism are equally his.

In the fourth scene of the second act (5.156), Lear goes down on his knees before his daughter Regan:

Deare daughter, I confess that I am old,

Age is vnneecessarie, on my knees I beg,

which Regan calls an "vnfightly trick".

The storm on the heath is Shakespeare's invention and it must be called the climax of gestic intensity.

The ghastly atmosphere of madness is further maintained by the trial scene of mad Lear, in which Lear distributes the seats to the different judges and angrily looks at his "daughters". Edgar and the fool enter into the spirit of his dumb-show. The Fool draws a chair near to him, it becomes Goneril and, of course, "she" cannot avow her name. The fool comments on this by addressing in his turn the chair with the words "Cry you mercy I tooke you for a ioyne ftoole", the joke lying in the fact that in this special case he does address a joint stool, while generally the saying must have been

applied to human beings⁵¹. As soon as Lear has gone to rest, Gloucester's blinding begins. Whether, as Tieck supposes, "the act is not positively seen" or whether, as I should say, the audience is to witness the abominable deed, is not important, as it is only a question of degree. If we compare Sydney's "Arcadia" and what it makes of the Gloucester story (Dover cliff), we notice that again Shakespeare adds a touch of macabre and phantastic comicality to the seriousness of the situation. The whole manœuvre that Edgar undertakes with Gloucester shows Shakespeare at the climax of his gestic craftsmanship. The verse obeys him absolutely and he is able to express anything with it:

Edg.: *Give me your arme.*

Vp, fo: How is't? Feele you your Legges? You stand.

Glou.: *Too well, too well* (Lear, 4.6.65).

If we try to translate this into prose, into stage-direction or novelistic prose, we begin to realize how much of gestic contents has been condensed into one blank verse: The fact that he repeats the two words illuminates his gestures; "too well" alone would give him a different gestic character, he would be much more self-assertive, with young and energetic movements.

Lear's healing from insanity is certainly the most touching part of the whole play and it shows how much Shakespeare is master of the stops of his organ. The roaring and raving Lear of the heath, with his loud and pathetic gestures, has become still and fills the house with that stillness, in which it can hear the softer accents; we are now prepared to notice the tears drop.

The only gestures that the anonymous playwright has at his disposal are "kneeling down" and "rising". Thus Cordella twice kneels down and is twice bidden to rise again; and Leir, after having knelt down twice before his daughter and having risen again, kneels down a last time for thanksgiving. After him, Mumford (Shakespeare's Kent) also kneels down for prayer.

In Lear, the gestic play is more refined, but also less clear. King Lear is carried on the stage in his chair, asleep. He is apostrophized by Cordelia, when he wakes up and begins to speak without recognizing her. The doctor recommends to Cordelia to leave her father alone for a while, and the Doctor and Cordelia seem to be withdrawing a little in order to observe Lear, who begins to soliloquize, trying to remember his past. As he is not sure of his state of consciousness, he stretches out his hands and touches them to make sure, whether he is awake or sleeping, he even pricks them with a needle. Corde-

⁵¹ This must have been a common saying in Shakespeare's day. Steevens finds it in Lyly's *Mother Bombye*, 4. 2., ed. Fairholt, vol. 2, p. 121, and Halliwell knows it as a proverb of the Elizabethan age. They both cannot explain it and do not see why it should appear in this connection. As to the sense of it we should say that it is just one of those thousands of inexplicable jokes of the lower ten thousand (rhyming slang perhaps)—as to its place in the play, I can no longer doubt that my explanation is the right one.

lia approaches him once more and now there is a considerable gestic hiatus in the following three lines:

*O looke vpon me Sir,
And hold your hand in benediction o're me,
You must not kneele. (Lear 4. 7. 57)*

Now, my point is: if she did not kneel down herself, how could she wish him to hold his hands over her? The only clear hint in these three lines is the one for Lear who is evidently bidden to rise from his humiliating posture. Then he probably lies down on his chair again, possibly in a half recumbent attitude. But the now following gestic detail recompenses us for all the preceding troubles and puzzles: Cordelia bends over her old father and weeps, and the old man, who feels her tears drip down on his cheeks, cannot believe that someone—the last of his daughters—should weep for his sake. He must first assure himself of the reality of those tears. He touches his cheek with his fingers and recognizes with astonishment: “Yes, faith.” In a gesture unimaginable with his Leir-predecessor, Shakespeare summarizes the theme of the whole play. Of all the horrors of the fifth act we may say what Albany says of Edmund’s death: “That’s but a trifle heere.” The important thing has happened: Tears of joy and of pity have been shed for the monarch; he has found the love for which he had always craved and which had indirectly been the source of his foolish examination at the beginning. The important event of the fourth act is that gesture of humiliation (alluded to in the fifth act):

*when thou dost aske my blessing, Ile kneele downe
And ask of thee forgiuenesse.*

The blank-verse is as smooth in Leir as in King Lear, the poetic diction sometimes verges on that of Shakespeare. But the gestures are incomparably stiffer in the old play, and a scene like that in the fifth act of Lear, in which the king tries to prove to himself that his daughter is still alive (“this feather stirs, she liues: if it be so, / It is a chance which does redeeme all sorrowes / That euer I haue felt”) is possible only in Shakespeare.—And if we compare Shakespeare’s gestic style of his maturer years with his early plays or with such plays that might have been his in his early days, we begin to see the silhouette of what is essentially Shakespearean.

c) Shakespeare’s Late Plays

A sharp tripartition of Shakespeare’s works into beginnings, middle period, and late production is, of course, impossible; the plays between R. & J. and the Temp. are full of stylistic transitions, relapses, and stagnations. But in the last of his great tragedies we certainly have something astonishingly different from the gestures of the history period.

The main body of this essay will consist in a study of Shakespeare’s master

period, the most "Shakespearean" epoch of his production. The last plays are, in all respects, something new again. He once more attempts a new style of gestic expression. It is an idle and yet most inevitable trend of speculation, that desire to know what would have happened, if Shakespeare had not retired. Somehow he seems to have been at the end of his production, and when Prospero lays down his charming-rod, he puts a final stop to Shakespeare's dramatic possibilities.

This point is fully confirmed by the analysis of the stage-business of the last plays. After his first period of imitation (containing already the buds for the future development) we run through periods of growth, blooming, and fruitage, represented by the great tragedies. In these, the gestic invention of the artist is boundless. And, as if his virtuosity had become uncanny and even dangerous to the poet himself, he almost gives it up in his last epoch. Did he dream of a new gestic style? or did he feel the coming end? If the biography that we are accustomed to call Shakespeare's is true, he died at fifty-two and he therefore seems to have retired at the age of about forty-six or forty-seven years. Ill health, the forebodings of death, may have been one reason for his resignation as an artist; the failure (or what he regarded as such) in finding new ways of expressing himself certainly was another ground. The last epoch was a time of cautiousness and reserve and we may suppose—this, at least, is my thesis—that the poet was aiming at a style similar to that of the French dramatists of the next generation. He had brilliantly displayed his skill; he now gave up that firework of stage business and gestures and tried something new; something simple and pure; something calm, with a main stress on the word again. Not that he would not have been able to continue in the *Lear* and *Hamlet* line: he laid down his wand, when he was fully master of it.

The formula that connects the middle period (*Ham.*, *Lear*, *Oth.*) with his later works is that of progressive mitigation; the older the poet becomes, the less savage his personages become in their actions and gestures. The number of murders and suicides on the stage diminishes; inevitable bloodshed is committed behind the scenes; in *Temp.* not one person is hurt. The best illustrations to what I say will be the respective finales of *Titus*, *Ham.*, and the *W. T.* Their (gestic!) labels would be: "nauseous" for *Titus*; "grand" (comparable only with the last scene of the *Nibelungs*) for *Ham.*; "mild" for the two romances, *W. T.* and *Temp.* The orgies of devilish cruelty and horror had belonged to a world as idealized as that of the unearthly frolic of a *Stephano* and *Trinculo*. Between the two lies the suit-the-action-to-the-word period of stage realism.

In the *W. T.*, the gestic air is already very thin and the heroine—a fine symbol of Shakespeare's quietism in his later years—is turned into a statue for some time, by which absence of motion is represented in its extreme form.

But the statuesque element is not the only one; the farcical one is another: while the death of Antigonus is mercifully hid from our sight and reduced to an account (words instead of actions!) of the poor man's destruction, we are witnesses of a return of Love's-Labour's-Lost farce in the person of Autolycus, the forerunner of Trinculo and Stephano: his speech in 4.3:

See'st thou not the ayre of the Court, in these enfoldings?

Hath not my gate in it, the measure of the Court?

reminds us of Malvolio. We are equally reminded of L.L.L., when Perdita addresses her companion with quick, operetta-like movements (4.3.112). The examples have been given above on page 77. The metrical parallel of the two passages is striking: some association—Edward A. Armstrong might find out which—leads him to the same words and gestures. Possibly it was only because the whole atmosphere was so much the same.

On the whole, the style becomes more theatrical again and less natural. There is even a return to the rhetorical style of L.L.L. in Florizel's speech (4.3.135: "what you do ... that all your acts are queens").

The poet, even in these late plays, still delights in psychological observation:

Shep.: *His garments are rich, but he wears them not handsomely.*

The spirit of satire again dominates in such lines: it had disappeared since L.L.L. and was almost absent⁵² in J.C.—to give one example only—when Caesar and his train were described by Brutus (J.C. 1.2.180 ff.) without any satirical intention. In W.T., we shall see Autolycus "pick his teeth" and the clown's commentary runs thus:

A great man, Ile warrant; I know by the picking on's Teeth,

which looks like a rather strong invective against certain courtiers of Shakespeare's day.

The Temp. is introduced by the scene that gives the play its name. The movements are of a wildness which approaches that of the well-known scene in Lear, and metre and diction are obviously reminiscences of King Lear's speeches ("Blow wind and⁵³ cracke your cheekes, rage, blow"; "Rumble thy belly full"):

Blow till thou burst thy wind, if roome enough.

But though the scene approaches the style of its predecessor in King Lear, it has, nevertheless, not the same function: in Lear it occupies the most important place in the play, 3.2; it is there the acme of a series of turbulent ups and downs—after the introductory hurly-burly of the Tempest, however, there is quiet and peace, and this preliminary tumult only emphasizes the delicacy of the subsequent chamber music of action and word. The gestures

⁵² The only satirical passage in J.C. that I know is that against Cinna, the poet (J.C. 3.3.34), who is to be killed for his bad verses.

⁵³ and] F1: &.

of the second scene have something hypnotic about them: Prospero's soft but commanding motions; Miranda's drowsiness; Ariel's vibrating restlessness. One principle has not been abandoned: the one of contrast. Scenes of mildness (Prosp.-Mir.) alternate with such of gestic harshness (Prosp.-Cal.). On the whole, however, we can say that the number of gestures implied in the text has diminished.

7. STATISTICAL RESULTS

An essay on Shakespeare's gestures would not be complete without an attempt at a numerical survey of Shakespeare's gestic development.

Does the number of gestures implied in the text increase as the poet develops his technique? Similar statistics have been drawn up for the metre, the images &c.

Before I proceed to give the percentages of the gestures, I think it necessary to premise a word of scepticism concerning this and similar enterprises. A statistical table will always be a very threadbare expression of the inner facts on which it is based: spirit cannot be expressed in curves and additions. Tables may draw our attention to something that must be felt and assimilated in a much more artistic way.

But there is another reservation to be made: the numerical extract of a voluminous opus like Shakespeare's will always be the result of years of card-indexing. But in the meantime the attitude and method of the collector are almost certain to change, either slightly or considerably. What was considered as an indication of a hidden gesture in the first year will not necessarily be regarded and counted as such five years later. And then there is, last but not least, the possibility of errors in the collection of the material and in the interpretation of it. If we add all this together, the belief in statistics will not become nil but at least it will be somewhat abated. Though it is hardly necessary to do so, we shall add some lines from Caroline Spurgeon's book:⁵⁴ "The difficulties and problems connected with the counting and classifying of images could hardly be believed by one who has not experienced them. Probably not two people would entirely agree as to the number of images to be found in any one play ... It must be remembered that any count of this kind, however carefully done, must to some extent be an approximate one ... The safeguard of this particular count is that it has been done by the same person and on the same method."

Some of the tragedies have been analyzed act by act and it will be seen that the number of gestures per act varies from play to play; there are some that

⁵⁴ *Shakespeare's Imagery*, 1934, Appendix 1:

have their "stresses" on the second and fourth act and others with one climax in the third. Othello is an exception with its anti-climax in the third act.

In the general table, implicit and explicit gestures have been added up and multiplied by one thousand, then divided by the number of verses, the latter according to the statistics of Professor Schücking. The chronological order is that of E. K. Chambers.

The results of my countings are these:

HISTORIES		COMEDIES		TRAGEDIES		ROMANCES	
1 H. VI	11	C. of E.	38	R. & J.	63	Cymb.	51
2 H. VI	15	Taming	40	J. C.	61	W. T.	22
3 H. VI	17	Two Gent.	36	Ham.	64	Temp.	62
R. III	28	L. L. L.	32	T. & C.	30		
Titus	60	M. N. D.	95	Oth.	62		
R. II	36	M. of V.	13	Lear	71		
K. J.	35	Much Ado	34	Mac.	79		
1 H. IV	26	As you	40	A. & C.	34		
2 H. IV	25	Tw. N.	58	Cor.	20		
H. V	20	M. W. W.	43	Timon	46		
		All's Well	30	Per.	31		
		M. for M.	30				
<i>Average:</i>		<i>Average:</i>		<i>Average:</i>		<i>Average:</i>	
27 gestures		40 gestures		51 gestures		45 gestures	
per one thousand		per one thousand		per one thousand		per one thousand	
lines		lines		lines		lines	

The four groups are at once the four chronological periods of Shakespeare's production and the four different types of drama he successively produced.

Neither will the number of implicit and explicit action-words per act be quite uninteresting. We here get the following data:

	I	II	III	IV	V
J. C.	3	4	10	6	7
	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0</i>
Oth.	2	3	2	3.5	12
	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2.5</i>
Lear	3.5	4.5	7	7.5	7
	<i>1</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
A. & C.	1	3	1	4	3.5
	<i>0.5</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>0</i>
Mac.	2	6.5	4.5	7.5	5
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>1</i>
W. T.	0.4	1.5	2.2	1.8	1.7
	<i>0.4</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.5</i>

The first line gives the number of explicit gestures per one hundred lines, the italics of the second line represent the percentage of implied gestures.

Some Classes of Gestures

8. THE DEICTIC GESTURES

Gestures of direction and demonstration, which accompany the demonstrative pronouns, are probably the earliest and simplest theatrical gestures, and moreover, those that are most frequently encountered. Even in the classical drama of Greek antiquity, we find gestures connected with the pronouns ὅδε, ἦδε, and τόδε; and in Shakespeare's plays we find the corresponding English pronouns combined with demonstrative gestures. In most cases their gestic value is so obvious that they need no additional stage-direction.

In the early plays, the deictic gestures generally go together with phantastic boasts and protestations of power or of loyalty, as e. g.:—"This sword that ...", "this arm (or: hand) that ...".

The later plays show an extraordinary refinement even of the deixis, except, of course, in the case of relapses into the early style, as in *Lear* (5.3.224): *What meanes this bloody knife?*

'Tis hot, it smoakes, it came euen from the heart of ...

Weapons are again and again presented with the remark "this sword". Very soon, however, the poet himself treats the same sentence with irony (cf. p. 45).

"This" may equally accompany an oath or a threat. Cassius gloomily prophesies: "I know where I will weare this dagger then" (J.C. 1.3.99); and with customary pride, Othello reminds the Senate of "these Armes of mine" (1.3.83). Wounds may also be presented (*Lear* 2.1.110); Antony shows Caesar's mantle to the crowd with the words: "You all do know this mantle... Looke in this place ran Caffius dagger through. See what a rent the envious Caska made / Through this ... Mark ... &c." (J.C. 3.2).

But deictic gestures in Shakespeare may be much more differentiated and complicated. Polonius' remark:—"take this¹ from this²; if this be otherwise" (*Ham.* 2.2) reminds us of the quibbles and tricks of the euphuistic epoch, as e. g. of:

Light seeking light, doth light of light beguile (L.L.L. 1.1).

The merely linguistic quibble has found its gestic counterpart: without an explanatory motion of the hand [this¹ (i.e. the head)—this² (i.e. the body)] the remark would be quite unintelligible.

The speaker of a line may be so confused that he cannot find adequate words for his turbulent feelings. His sentences may become a stammering, his vocabulary may have nothing to offer but the one helpless word "this":

just in such cases a gesture may give emotional hue to the naturally pale word. The contrast between the emptiness of the word and the oversaturated gesture will lay quite a special stress on such passages. Hamlet (5. 1. 200) works himself up into his morbid mood, until he comes to the words "to this favour": a gesture helps him over the inability to express a world of horror contained in the word "this" ("this" — a skull; rotten flesh; a place where lips hung; a skull without a jaw; foul smell).

Cassio, when he is drunk, wants to demonstrate his soberness:

Do not thinke, Gentlemen, I am drunke:

this is my Ancient, this is my right hand, and this is my left (Oth. 2. 3. 113).

But for the modern reader, the lack of stage-directions often makes the passage dim or even unintelligible. "Sweet Bianca, take me this worke out", is again a line spoken by Cassio in Oth. 3. 4. 179, and later editors meant to improve it by adding the stage-direction: "(Giving her Desdemona's handkerchief)". Bianca is requested to prick the pattern out of it.

In some cases, the understanding of the text is quite marred by the author's over-simplicity of expression. Goneril says to Edmund (Lear 4. 2. 20): "Weare this, spare speech." Since Dr. Johnson, it has been a tradition to add the bracket "(giving a favour)". So "this" could be a ribbon or some other keepsake. Hammer makes it a ring; Delius supposes that she wants to hang a chain around his neck. Schlegel desists from any interpretation and leaves us without a stage-direction.

Weare this; spare speech,

Decline your head. This kisse, if it durst speake

Would stretch your spirits vp into the ayre:

Conceiue, and fare thee well.

There must have stood a clear image before the poet's eye: a small Goneril and a tall Edmund, who has to stoop. But why does he stoop? What does Goneril offer him? Modern editors put a colon after "head", which is already an interpretation: he stoops, because she wants to kiss him. Though we could not follow all of Dr. Flatter's conjectures on Shakespeare's punctuation, one may agree with him when he says that the poet's commas and periods are "not just sprinkled out of the pepper-caster". The full-stop after "head" shows that the poet meant the whole passage from "weare" to "head" to be one unit. Thus we could paraphrase the text like this:

Weare this—

Goneril takes a chain from her neck; Edmund wants to speak, but she hinders him:

Spare speech.

After: "decline your head", there is a gap, during which she hangs the chain over his shoulders; then she kisses him:

This kisse ...

If this interpretation is wrong, the player has to take the keepsake from somewhere and has to hold it in his hands until the cue: "weare this." But we admit that we do not know either what "this" was; whether ribbon or chain or anything else, and we consequently cannot tell, how the article was delivered by the Shakespearean actor.

In Oth. (2.1.200) is another famous crux for the interpreters: Othello kisses Desdemona and says:

And this and this the greatest discords be

That ere our hearts shall make.

The quarto texts insert the word (*kisse*) between the two lines. "This and this" may, of course, be the cues for two kisses, which would not, however, quite harmonize with the word "discord", and the word "heart" still remains a problem. In his prompt-book, Edwin Booth makes the following suggestion, which, as it seems to me, is almost too subtle: "I think heart-throbs are better than kisses. Desdemona clasped to his breast, Othello feels the quick beating of her heart against his own." Thus we should get a real *discordia*, a non-congruity of the heart-beat. But how can we make the spectator guess this subtlety? How shall we suggest this rather complicated idea by means of a gesture? We should rather say that the phrase alludes to the space left between their two hearts, which Othello characterizes by a respective movement: "that is your heart, this is mine; the hearts cannot be one in space, but let the discord never be more than a difference in space." This would also explain why the F_1 omits the stage-direction ("kisse").

It might be said in passing that kisses are often accompanied by a demonstrative pronoun and are thus included in the text. "This is a soldier's *kisse*" (A. & C. 4.4), which Dr. Johnson paraphrases in a somewhat pedantic way by "kisses her". On the other hand, we cannot see the full gestic extent of A. & C. 3.2.174: "If from the Field I shall returne once more, / To *kisse* these Lips ..." Does he actually kiss her? The editors do not give any explanation.—The last kisses of Antony and the queen are fully implied in the text.

The preceding examples have shown already how expressive the demonstrative pronoun may be. The now following example will prove this even more particularly. Could any other word more appropriately accompany the delicate shade of feeling contained in "these" than just this deictic pronoun (Oph., Ham. 3.1):

*their perfume left:*¹

Take these again ...

All the poor heart's sadness and deception are mirrored in "these"; she is half ashamed to look at them and has no better word for what was once her pride and her treasure. But "these" implies a similar movement, too; a

¹ their ... left] F_1 : then perfume left.

gesture of embarrassment and despair. The modern stage would require a corresponding stage-direction.

Sometimes, "this" may stand for no more than a nod or a side-glance: "Is not this your Son, my Lord?" is Kent's question with reference to Edmund (*Lear* 1.1.8).—"But if these [— sideglance!], (As I am sure they do) beare fire enough" (*J.C.* 2.1.119).—"Is not that he that lies upon the ground?" and two lines later: "Is not that he?" (*J.C.* 5.3.57 ff.).

A deictic gesture may also point at another gesture and thus one word may illumine the movements of two actors: "What meanes that hand vpon that breast of thine?" (*K. J.* 3.1.19) refers to an action of the speaker as well as of the person spoken to. This is also the case with other deictic words such as "look", "see" &c.:

Doctor: *You see her eyes are open.*

... *What is it she do's now?*

Looke how she rubbes her hands. (*Mac.* 5.1.27)

Marcellus: *see where it comes again*

Hamlet: *Looke with what courteous action* (*Ham.* 1.1.35)

is Hamlet's comment upon what the Ghost does. In *K. J.* (2.1.474) we find: "I see a yeelding in the lookes of France / Marke how they whisper ..."

This list of gestures describing other gestures might be continued ad lib.

Another demonstrative gesture is indicated by the adverb *thus*: it is very frequent in Shakespeare's plays, but often it leaves the modern actor without a suggestion of what he is to do; it has unlimited power and may therefore be misinterpreted and misunderstood as often as it is performed without Shakespeare as a producer, for Shakespeare's personal stage-management would in many cases be the only help we can imagine; he might show the actors "how to do it".

Sometimes an elaborate description of what is going to happen precedes "thus", sometimes the particle stands alone. Among the latter cases, we find, of course, the most desperate problems. What shall an actor do with:

I saw a Smith stand with his hammer (thus) ...

With open mouth swallowing a Taylors newes (*K. J.* 4.2.192).

Belarius (*Cym.* 4.2.213) asks Arviragus, who carries Imogen on his arms: "How found you him?" to which his son answers: "His arms thus leagu'd, / I thought he slept."

In the fifth canto of the *Purgatorio* (5.126-127), Dante has this gesture (i.e. crossing one's arms on one's breast in the moment of great danger, in order to implore mercy of God) described by Buonconte: "e sciolsse al mio petto la croce / Ch'i' fe di me, quando'l dolor mi vinse." Johannes Oeschger²

² *Antikes und Mittelalterliches bei Dante*, Halle, 1944, p. 60

shows that there is an uninterrupted tradition for this gesture up to the cinquecento, thus up to Shakespeare's day.³

In this case, the word "thus" can be filled with substance merely by analogy. When Imogen felt death near, she crossed her arms on her breast, as we can see it done on many medieval cenotaphs.

But in Ham. 1. 5. 174 the word "thus" proves a much more difficult problem. Hamlet informs Horatio and Marcellus that he might think it prudent to feign an "Anticke disposition", and he asks them not to show by their behaviour what they know about his dissembling:

*neuer so help you mercy,
How strange or odd so ere I beare myselfe ...
With armes encombred thus, or thus, headshake
... to note
That you know ought of me.*

One may nod or wink to express some secret understanding [as in: "there be and (i.e. an) if there (i.e. they) might!"]: but how can one express by "armes encombred thus" that one knows of something? Moberley⁴ paraphrases by "folded thus in sign of wisdom"; but this does not help us on. We know that crossed arms characterized the melancholiac, which proves how much a gesture may lose its sense in the course of time.⁵

In the illustrations to the Sachsenspiegel, the code of the Old Saxon laws (*Der Sachsenspiegel, Bilder aus der Heidelberger Handschrift*, eingeleitet und erläutert von Eberhard Freiherr von Künssberg, sine anno, Inselverlag), we find as illustration 88 the picture of a Yeoman who refuses to give evidence. We have the same situation as in Hamlet: he knows, but he does not want to speak or is not allowed to. „Kein ausländig Mann ist auch pflichtig zu entworten in einem Dorff ...“ III, 79. The man in the medieval illumination crosses his arms. The pictures date from the 14th century, i.e. 275 years before Shakespeare's epoch.

So this is, as it seems to me, the true explanation of Hamlet's "arms encombred thus".⁶

But this example may also illustrate how much the interpretation of implied gestures may be thwarted by the inconsistency of Elizabethan printing. The two first prints, the Q₁ and Q₂, read:

I	:	II
with Armes incombred thus,		or this head shake

³ Oeschger cites the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, s.v. "croce".

⁴ Furness, I.C. 1. 5. 174.

⁵ Cf. p. 12, chapter I, of this essay.

⁶ Walther Müller in his Greifswald thesis of 1927 (*Der schauspielerische Stil im Passionspiel des Mittelalters*, p. 17) calls encombring of the arms a legal gesture of the Middle Ages (Armverschränken als Verweigerungsgeste).

whilst the Folio of 1623 has:

<u>with Armes incombred thus,</u>	<u>or thus,</u>	<u>head shake</u>
I	II	III

Did the editors of the first Folio think of two different ways of crossing one's arms (which does not seem quite impossible), marked by I and II; or do II and III represent two phases of only one motion, while the comma after II would correspond to a modern colon: "or thus: (i.e. namely) head-shake"?

The latter seems less probable to us, as it would give the movements of the actor something mechanical and abrupt. Modern editors have all preferred the Quarto reading.

It belongs to the nature of the word "thus" that it is only intelligible when accompanied by a respective gesture; thence the many obscurities in the Shakespearean canon:

Is the world as it was Man? Which is the way?

Is it sad, and few words? Or how? The tricke of it?

Duke: *Still thus, and thus: still worfe?* (M. f. M. 3. 2. 53).

We are convinced that this passage will remain an enigma: for even if research could find out a stage tradition somewhere: the text, with which we are only concerned here, offers no standpoint from which we may ever hope to resolve this problem.

"Thus" need not, however, be so ambiguous as in the examples mentioned above. It may very well have the preciseness of a real stage-direction:

he put it by with the backe of his hand, thus ... (J. C. 1. 2. 241).

Or Ophelia:

Then goes he to the length of all his arme

And with his other hand thus o're his brow, ... (Ham. 2. 1. 88).

But the clearness of these cases never comes from inside the word "thus"; it follows the description of a gesture and points at the spot where it has to be put into action.

To what extent was Shakespeare himself conscious of this problem? Did he realize that the lack of preciseness of some of his hints at gestures would render many of his allusions unintelligible in later time? May we regard the poet's carelessness in gestic matters as a proof that he did not mean to write "literature"? that he allowed himself a considerable freedom of expression because he knew that he would "produce" the play on the stage? We do not mean to presume any such thing. It is very well possible that he was not conscious at all of the difficulties in staging the plays that arise from the disproportion of word and action. Shakespeare, the producer, knew exactly what he would tell the actors to do at:

Iago.: *Vertue? a figge, 'tis in our selues that we are thus, or thus ...*

(Oth. 1. 3. 328).

There must have been some gesture of the hand, possibly that of the Roman emperors in the circus, with the thumb turned up or down. In this Othello quotation, the "up" and the "down" would follow each other. In Edwin Booth's⁷ promptbook we do find the note: "point up or down, to signify good or bad." But these are mere suggestions and they are as vague as guesses may be. We may as well suppose Iago to stretch his hand out with the palm turned upwards first and then downwards. "Thus" determines that something happens, but it completely neglects the "what".

One of the tenderest gestures is Othello's movement with which the inner rupture between him and his wife is indicated:

Look heere Iago,

All my fond loue thus do I blow to Heauen.

'Tis gone (3.3.445).

This masterly stroke in Othello's portrait is achieved without one word of stage-direction.

Lay thy finger thus: and let thy soule be instructed,

is Iago's word (2.1.223) and we may identify its gesture with that in Ham. (1.5.187): "And still your fingers on your lippes I pray." In Ham., the situation is sufficiently clear and Hamlet need not explain by a gesture what he means.

"This hand" was a conventional word for a conventional gesture: people used to swear upon their fingers. We read in Oth. 2.1.264: "Lechery, by this hand." Or in Ham.: "—by these pickers and stealers", i.e. on his fingers, which are, *pars pro toto*, the hand again. In the above-quoted passage (Oth. 2.1.264), the Arden Edition has a cross-reference to M. of V., 5.1.161:

A thing stucke on with oathes upon your finger.

The Arden Edition now regards "upon your finger" as an attributive adjunct to "oathes" (i.e. oaths sworn upon the finger), whereas we should define it as a simple adverbial adjunct to "stucke" (viz. stuck upon your finger with oaths). It may be regarded as a proof of our proposition that there is no second case of oath upon one finger in the plays of Shakespeare.

Oaths and curses are nearly related and so we find cases in which the hand curses or is cursed, too. The king in Ham. looks with horror at his "curfed hand" (3.3.48), and Lady Macbeth tries in vain to wash her hands clean of the king's blood. The hand—as a symbol and instrument of acting—thus rises to a sacrosanct sphere. (Which it always had in religion: the catechumen had to swear to keep his hands from picking and stealing; we may also think of the passage in St. Mark 9.43, in which the hand is personified as the evil-doer.)

⁷ Furness Variorum, i.c.

"Yon" is only a variety of "that" and is equally connected with deictic gestures. Shakespeare seems to prefer "yon" in landscape-description (Horatio in Ham. 1. 1):

*But look the morne in Russet mantle clad,
Walks o're the dew of yon high Easterne Hill ...*

In a theatre without scenery like Shakespeare's, a gesture, now and then, had to provide for light and colour. A gesture based on "yon" must have been different from one on "that": the final -n of it seems to invite to a prolonged gesture of the outstretched arm. The distant horizon is indicated by "yon grey lines, / That fret the clouds" (J. C. 2. 1. 100).⁸ In Ham. (1. 1), Bernardo successfully creates a midnight atmosphere with the gesture of "yond faine Starre that's Westward from the Pole".

Apart from "this", "that", "behold", "lo!", the demonstrative adverbs "here" and "there" involve deictic gestures, too. The disappearance of the ghost (or rather its dissolution) is intimated by the words:

'Tis heere.

'Tis heere.

'Tis gone.

They do not only point at it with their fingers, but aim at it with their halberds, which is made clear by Marcellus' words:—"our vain Blowes."

"There" and "this" often accompany the distribution of things, the delivery of a letter; and Ophelia distributes her imaginary flowers with a pantomime of "there's" and "heere's", i. e. by a series of spoken stage-directions. The monotony and stubbornness of her madness is reflected in the sixfold repetition of "there's" and "heere's"; it also gives to all her doing something childlike.

Shakespeare does not recognize the distinction between "here" and "there" that the modern language observes. "Here" may also stand for distant things as in J. C. 2. 1. 124:

Here lyes the East

and some lines further:

Here as I point my Sword, the sun arises.

In the case of "these" (Hamlet-Ophelia), we have pointed out how the poet is able to transform such a colourless word as "this" into a touching scene by means of a corresponding gesture: in the same play, shortly before the final combat, 5. 2. 221, Hamlet opens his mind to Horatio and he frankly admits:

but thou wouldst not thinke how all heere (is) about my heart.

⁸ This passage is moreover an admirable example of stagecraft: while Brutus and Cassius step aside to discuss their secrets, the rest of the actors politely retire to some other part of the stage, talking about the weather. And then Cinna points to the east and announces the approach of the morning.

The actor is forced to make a movement towards his heart. This is again an instance of the overflowing of the feeling beyond the capacities of human speech; a shy but significant movement reveals a world of emotion.

And this is one of the secrets of Shakespeare's charm: his seemingly easy way of pouring everyday speech into the mould of poetry. We seem to overhear the poet speaking to his wife and his friends when he gives us such lines as these:

Looke, Lucius, heere's the booke I fought for so:

I put it in the pocket of my Gowne (J.C. 4.3.294)

or soon after in a distich: (alexandrine-blankverse)

Let me see, let me see; is not the leafe turn'd downe

Where I left reading? Heere it is I thinke.

In these cases, naturalism has been amalgamated as much with poetry as is compatible with the nature of art. And the perpetual interpenetration of tragical and comical (or at least, everyday) elements is perceptible even in the gestures and prevents us from merely applying the criteria of the Renaissance and Baroque poetics⁹ to Shakespeare's plays, their style of action being now this and now that. In the tragical romance of the W. T., the poet inserts the small scene of Leontes's helping his son to keep his nose clean. We can measure what such possibilities mean to a dramatist, if we compare Shakespeare's style to the much smaller scope of expression of French classicism.

9. GESTURES OF INVOCATION

„Die Poeterey ist anfanges nichts anders gewesen als eine verborgene Theologie, und unterricht von Göttlichen sachen.“ (Martin Opitz, *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey*, 1624.) And drama was among the oldest forms of poetry. The priest and the actor had much in common: their gestures and many of their words were the same. In the early Middle Ages, priests were the actors of the mysteries. The Mass is the sublimest example of that synthesis.

With raised and outspread arms the priest implores the gods;¹⁰ so does the believer when he kneels down for prayer at home; and so does the actor. The Greeks had the same word for supplication (prayer) and invocation. On the stage and in religious life they spoke of *πρόσευξις* or *εὐχή*; to implore the gods with uplifted arms was *εὐχέσθαι τοῖς θεοῖς*.

⁹ In Baroque painting and sculpture (especially in the representations of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints) the margin between everyday intimacy and sublimity is much smaller than in the theoretical books on poetry and in the standard plays of French, German, or English Baroque.

¹⁰ Schott's Missal has a special chapter in which the church-goer gets an explanation of the traditional gestures of the priest.

In modern life the religious gestures have become much more sober.¹¹ To the man in the street, a prayer with uplifted arms would look stagy and affected, in one word: theatrical. (These problems would deserve special consideration.)

In Shakespeare's plays the grand gestures, the Miltonic sway, are of primordial importance. A god may be addressed, or nature, the latter as a whole or as a personified part of it.

In *As You, Orlando* has the stage for himself for a while and he begins to apostrophise the moon (3. 2. 2):

*And thou thrice crowned Queene of night suruey
With thy chaste eye, from thy pale spheare above
Thy Huntresse name, that my full life doth sway.*

There was a gesture behind this passage, but it is very difficult to say which; or rather: it is left to the actor, within a certain limit, to do what he thinks proper. A similar oath occurs in the *Two Gent.* (4. 2. 101) in Silvia's line:
by this pale queene of night I sweare.

Hamlet successively addresses the whole universe. With his palms turned upwards he first refers to the earth, calling it a "sterill Promontory"; in magnificent gradation he then proceeds to the climax of the word "why", at which he stops for a moment: then, with a wide sweep of the arms, he implicates "the sky" in all that was once precious to him and that has lost its sheen: "this most excellent Canopy the Ayre, look you, this braue orehanging, this Maiesticall Rooffe, fretted with golden fire: why, it appeares no other thing to mee, then a foule and pestilent congregation of vapours." From "it appeares" to the end there must be a remarkable diminuendo in his gestures.

The oaths of revenge of Othello and Iago are connected with heaven, which implies gestures towards the sky. The editors of the Quartos and Folios disagree, however, as to the place of the respective stage-directions. Q₁ has Othello's "he kneeles" beside "Pray be content" (F₁ "yet be content"), a line spoken by Iago. The first Folio has no stage-direction at all. Iago's kneeling is at about the right place in Q₁. The text does not speak of Othello's raising his hands or his hand for his oath; we only learn from the text that he has knelt down, as Iago can say to him "Do not rise yet".

Oth.: *Swell bosome with thy fraught,
For 'tis of Aspickes tongues.*

Iago: *Yet be content.* (he kneeles)

Oth.: *Oh blood, blood, blood*

Iago: *Patience I say: your mind may change.*

¹¹ In William Booth's early days, there was nothing uncommon in a person's kneeling down for prayer in the street (Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth*, 1920).

Oth.: *Never Iago. Like to the Ponticke Sea,
Whose Icie Current, and compulsiue course,
Nen'r keepes retyring ebbe, but keepes due on
To the Proponticke, and the Hellespont:
Euen so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace
Shall nen'r looke backe, nen'r ebbe to humble Loue
Till that a capeable, and wide Reuenge
Swallow them vp. Now by yond Marble Heauen,
In the due reuerence of a Sacred vow,
I heere engage my words.*

Iago: *Do not rise yet:
Witnesse you euer-burning Lights aboue,
You Elements, that clip vs round about, (he kneeles)
Witnesse that heere Iago doth giue vp
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's Seruice. Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody businesse euer. (3.3.450 sq.)*

The later Folio-text quite suppresses the stage-directions, a fact which proves no impediment to the understanding of the passages, as the remark "do not rise yet" covers the kneeling down of both of them. Othello's true oath can scarcely be distinguished from Iago's false one, the theatricality of his gestures being part of Iago's nature. In Edwin Booth's prompt-book¹² we find the following comment on Othello's gestures: "Both hands above the head, with upturned palms and fingers towards the back. I used this gesture impulsively in England first, and it was spoken of as suggestive of the Orient. Iago watches Othello keenly—sidewise—during the next speech; while Othello seems absorbed and with upturned eyes."

The next similar protestation in the same play comes from Desdemona (4.2.150):

Des.: *Alas Iago,
What shall I do to win my Lord againe?
Good friend, go to him: for by this light of Heauen,
I know not how I lost him. Heere I kneele ...*

While she apostrophizes "the light of Heauen", she obviously kneels down with her hands turned upwards. The light of Heauen is in this case approached with a solemn gesture. But this need not be so: we often hear Shakespeare's personages address the sun (God?) in the careless, easy flow of every-day language, as e.g. in the lazy small-talk of the following scene:

¹² Furness Variorum, l.c.

Defd.: *Would'st thou do such a deed* (i.e. deceive her husband) *for all the world.*

Aem.: *Why, would not you?*

Defd.: *No, by this Heavenly light.*

The quicker rhythm of this line quite excludes kneeling down or anything similar; the less, because Emilia then gives the tone of the conversation a frivolous bye-taste when she continues:

Nor I neither, by this Heavenly light:

I might doo't as well i' th' darke.

We must therefore admit that "by this heavenly light" could be used in a conversation without being accompanied by a gesture; or as said above: the same words do not mean the same gestures.

A scene of utmost magnificence in K. J. (only equalled by King Lear in the storm) is Constance's invocation of heaven "to be her husband":

Arme, arme, you heauens, against these periur'd Kings,

A widdow cries, be husband to me (beauens)

... Heare me, Oh, beare me (K. J. 3. 1. 33).

The second scene of the second act of Cymbeline opens with the following stage-direction:—"Enter Imogen, in her Bed, and a Lady." The curtain of the tiring-house is drawn aside, and we see Imogen, who is reading in bed, with her Lady-in-waiting. Imogen is very tired when she hands her book to the lady and she neither kneels nor even folds her hands when she says her prayer. The last words already merge into sleep:

To your protection I commend me, Gods

From Fayries, and the Tempters of the night,

Guard me beseech yee. (sleepes.)

This is the somewhat thoughtless prayer of a child; it is said mechanically and without even the gesture of folding the hands. It follows immediately upon the words

Sleepe hath seiz'd me wholly.

As it is merely the mechanical repetition of a wonted formula, its effect is nil and the disaster—"Iachimo from the Trunke"—cannot be averted.

How much different are Lear's curses on the heath: these are effective invocations of divinity. It is evident that the old Celtic king does not kneel, and yet his whole body prays and curses. The firmament and all the elements are addressed and they become subject to the magical force of the terrible curses.

With a loving movement Edgar embraces the "vnsubstantiall ayre" of the heath (Lear 4. 1. 6). Albany remembers the powers of heavenly justice when he hears that Cornwall, the monster, has been punished for his inhuman cruelties. He probably lifts his hands up to his shoulders with the palms upward.

When Lady Macbeth asks the "spirits of destruction" to come down on her and adds: "vnfex me here", she touches her heart, the seat of pity.

"My Womans Brests" goes with a respective gesture. "Come thick Night" must be interpreted as a gesture of yearning and desire.

Macbeth himself (2. 1. 56) directs his speech to the Earth:

Thou fowre and firme-set Earth,

Heare not my steps ...

But the gesture of the invocation is obscure. He seems to advance in a slow and dilatory way.

When Antony understands that everything is lost for him (A. & C. 4. 10), he turns to the sun and speaks:

Oh Sunne, thy vprise shall I see no more.

The respective gesture must at least consist in looking up at the sun, just as when Cleopatra exclaims:

Oh Sunne, Burne the great Sphere thou mou'st in ... (4. 12).

One of the most curious invocations of natural phaenomena is Coriolanus' address to the clouds:

Why then should I be Consul? by yond Clouds ...

Finally, we might quote another analogon with Lear's speech on the heath: the boatswain's lines in the Temp. 1. 1.: "Blowe till thou burst thy winde if room enough." In grim anger the old king and the boatswain raise their fists to the raving element.

But not only supernatural powers are implored by the Shakespearean characters; we see just as often men kneel down before each other; even women kneel down before men, as e.g. Portia before Brutus (J.C. 2. 2. 270): "vpon my knees, / I charme you." Brutus however at once urges her: "Kneele not gentle Portia." We equally see Desdemona kneel before Othello; and there is Volumnia's humiliation in Coriolanus.

The importunate demand of the petitioners in J.C. represents another degree of intensity of will. Artemidorus and Decius force their petitions upon Caesar (3. 1. 1), and Artemidorus does it with so much momentum that he causes Caesar's remark:

What, is the fellow mad?

The sophist is, indeed, soon pushed aside with the words: "Sirra, giue place." Then Metellus advances and prostrates himself before Caesar. There is, however, no old stage-direction to the passage, and the modern editors have "kneeling", which is indeed very careful; on the other hand, we admit that an editor of this poet cannot be too careful with his interpretations of the text. Nothing at all, I should say, would be better, as it would not restrict the actor. How can one kneel down and say such words as:

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar

Metellus Cymber throwes before thy Seate

An humble heart.

Caesar dislikes "these couchings, and these lowly courtesies"; the "low-crooked-curtfies, and base Spanieff fawning". And probably in order to provoke his anger, Brutus kisses Caesar's hand, and Cassius even outdoes him by another Byzantinism:

Pardon Caesar: Caesar pardon:

As lowe as to thy foote doth Cassius fall.

The effect of this is intensified by the inversion and repetition of the first line. After Caesar's long speech, and after three other speeches, we hear Caesar's—impatient—line: "Doth not Brutus bootlesse kneele?" by which he wants to intimate the uselessness of any further harassing. Therefore, Brutus must have remained in a kneeling position when he has kissed the hand of his paternal friend. The same attitude may be supposed to have been that of the other petitioners.

In Caesar 3. 1. 142, an officer with flag of truce visits Brutus, and he displays the same formal servility:

Thus Brutus did my Master bid me kneele;

Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall downe,

And being prostrate, thus he bad me say.

In this case we can be quite sure that the emissary falls prostrate before Brutus. The interpretation of Craig appears quite natural and the only one possible. He punctuates: "and, being prostrate, thus he bade me say: / Brutus is noble" &c. "Thus" seems to point forward to the following speech. Dyce has the same punctuation. And yet we offer a new distribution of the punctuation-marks which approaches Shakespeare's intentions even more closely; many instances of seemingly wrong punctuation have proved to be very wise stage-directions and helps to the actor. A comma may stand for a dash, for instance. So if we had to modernize the punctuation-signs of these lines, we should interpret them thus:

a) And, being prostrate—thus, he bade me say
or simply:

b) And, being prostrate thus, he ...

In either case, the new reading would stress the humility of the actor and would be much more "gestic" than the merely prognostic "thus" of the ordinary modern editions. To the audience, such Byzantine prostrations were familiar from "Tamburlaine" or "Faustus".

In the C. of E. (5. 1. 114) we read:

Come go, I will fall prostrate at his feete,

And neuer rise vntill my teares and prayers

Haue won his grace ...

This contains almost no problem; but what shall we say when we read the following lines in K. J.:

If old Sir Robert did beget vs both,

And were our father, and this sonne like him:

O old fir Robert Father, on my knee

I giue heauen thanks I was not like to thee (1.1.82).

His gesture, whatever it may have been, must obviously have been a joke. The character of the Bastard authorizes us to a certain extent to think that he actually did kneel down. King John alludes to his youthful clownishness, when he specifies him as a "mad-cap" in the next line. But the exact interpretation of this one gesture by the actor requires a minute study of not only all the other gestures of the Bastard in the rest of the play but especially of his psychology. As a nephew of the King and illegitimate son to Cœur-de-Lion he must be given a certain dignity and noble behaviour; and on the other hand his hare-brained light-heartedness must be made apparent.

Hamlet never kneels down before other people except perhaps before his mother; but even this is not quite sure, unless we deduce it from his line 3.4.154:

Virtue it selfe, of Vice must pardon begge,

Yea, courb, and woe, for leaue to do him good.

Hamlet is "virtue" und Gertrude "vice" and he probably gives himself a stage-direction and is the commentator of his own gestures.

10. DEATH

With infinite care the poet observes the dying persons among his characters. Ophelia, that innocent, naive creature, is not shown in her death; her exit is a soft dissolution in the waves of a rivulet in the most delightful scenery we can imagine. The execution of Claudius, that "incestuous, murderous, damned Dane", in the fifth act counterpoises her departure. The poisoned rapier and the poison in the cup are his reward, and while he denounces his nephew, the latter curses him with the bitterest words. "He is iustly seru'd", says Laertes, who at the same time knows that his punishment is ready, too: but his guilt, he knows, will be forgiven, just as he forgives his adversary. There is no hint at a possible gesture, at a shaking of hands for instance. But there must be a movement of the hand, or possibly a forgiving headshake or smile in "Heauen make thee free of it, I follow thee". The stage-direction *Dyes* precedes this line, but most directions precede the line they concern.¹³ So Laertes is meant to hear what the Prince says and he dies with an expression of comfort. This is reading between the lines, but Shakespeare says almost

¹³ The prompter, from whose copy the Shakespearean Qq and Ff were probably printed, was responsible for the entrances of the actors and he had to draw their attention to the cue in time.

as much by what he conceals as by what he says. We cannot read the text too carefully. The noblest death in the play is Hamlet's; after a manly struggle, which is in itself a most complicated piece of dramatic art, the hero expires. After the line: "I am dead *Horatio*", he looks for a last time in the direction of the dead Queen and gives her a final "adieu". This coincides strangely with what Richard Flatter makes out in *Hamlet's Father*, though he approaches the problem from a different side. The catastrophe of the play only emphasizes what we can again and again notice in Shakespeare: that negative action of being immobilized by death, the hopeless effort of reaching a fellow creature and the painful awareness of the impossibility of doing so. Old Hamlet steals away from Gertrude's bedroom with a "pitteous action"; Laertes and Hamlet cannot shake hands any more; Hamlet and his mother, as well as Hamlet and the bystanders, are separated by death. And so are Antony and Cleopatra in the monument. This is the gesture of death: immobility, separation; space growing between the doomed and those who surround him, the "Mutes or audience to this acte". Hamlet, possibly supported in a half-recumbent attitude by Horatio, knows that if he could speak—but he again collapses at: "*Horatio* I am dead." We unfortunately cannot tell from the text what Hamlet does during the lines that Laertes speaks to him ("He is iustly ... nor thine on me"). Does he carry the poisonous cup with him, or has it rolled towards the place where he sinks down? Horatio takes it up and wants to swallow the rest: "Heere's yet some Liquor left." With his dying force, Hamlet struggles in order to obtain the cup: "Giue me the Cup. Let go, by Heauen Ile haue't."

Hamlet's last gesture is the "passive gesture" of being borne out by the soldiers. And this is again a sublime effect of contrast: some minutes before, we saw the hero in full activity, now he is borne out "like a Soldier to the Stage"; even in his death he proves "most royally". A rash posterity has reproached the poet with this addition, viz. the appearance of Fortinbras.

G. Wilson Knight says in the introduction to his *Wheel of Fire*: "When a play is understood in its totality, the faults automatically vanish."

First of all it was a question of dismissing the spectators: to end the play after Horatio's line to the dead prince would leave many, if not most, of the spectators strongly moved and excited. The appearance of valiant young Fortinbras with his self-possessed gestures takes the pressure from us which has been created by the pianissimo of "Now cracks¹⁴ a Noble heart: Good-night sweet Prince, / And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest." The world goes on, we may breathe again. There are Fortinbras' authoritative movements: after the chaos of the last scenes we again begin to believe in order

¹⁴ cracks] F1: cracke.

and constructive powers. The spectator is given time to objectivize his grief and after moans and sighs and death there is a fresh breeze from the sea.

And closely connected with this psychological reason, there is our gestic one: The ending of the play may be divided into three phases; 1. the hero at bay; 2. the hero dying and dead; 3. the elevation of the hero.

To see the hero at bay—as Dover Wilson remarks—must have been the climax of all that had preceded; in Shakespeare's day even more than now. Experts at sword play were judging experienced swordsmen. And, suddenly after the enthusiastic warmth, the heroic period turns into the pathetic one. After the supreme movement there follows the deepest rest; the allegro and exertion of the fencing-scene has given way to the andante and relaxation of Hamlet's death. The gestures of weakness are dominant after those of force. But a hero like Hamlet does not die away with a pianissimo of "flights of Angels jing thee to thy rest". Something has to follow the extinction and the stiffness of death. After positive gesturing (the fight), after the absence of gestures (death), there follows the last, "passive" gesture of the prince, his apotheosis. The "Rites of memory" that Fortinbras has to perform are as much an integral part of the play as the fencing-match and must by no means be left out.

And the last speech of Fortinbras shows that the poet knew how to stage a transporting finale:

For.: *Let foure Capitaines*

Beare Hamlet like a Soldier to the Stage,

The four captains must be given ample time to step to Hamlet's corpse, to stoop, and to prepare the body for transport; the poet has inserted two lines of ungestic speech:

For he was likely, had he beene put on

To haue prou'd most royally:

There is a last preparation left for the last accords: the trombonists and the artilleryman have to make ready. And now follows the last action:

Take vp the body.

Some modern editors change "bodie" (Q) and "body" (F) into "bodies". But even if the Queen, Laertes, and Claudius were somehow removed from the stage, it must have happened almost clandestinely: the main spectacle was Hamlet and the group of soldiers who carried him out. High over the heads of the captains we see the dead prince; the tender passage of the play is over and has given way to the sublime.

Desdemona's death has been the object of much pondering. A few minutes after her strangling, Othello's wife begins to speak again; for a long time this was regarded as a case of negligence on the part of the author. Furness¹⁵

¹⁵ Furness Variorum, I. c.

wrote to several physicians to know their opinions on the possibility of such an occurrence. Most of the answers were of little or no avail. At last, he found a case of speaking post mortem in C. B. Radcliffe's *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*. It corresponds exactly to the circumstances in Othello and invalidates the accusations of the critics who held that Shakespeare was incompetent in some points of medicine.

The accuracy with which Shakespeare arranges the murder makes one shudder. Desdemona is not even given time to pray:

Des.: *But while I say one prayer*

Oth.: *It is too late.* (Smothers [*Qq stifles*] her.)

But she is not yet dead, she still stirs:

Oth.: *What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?*

His cruel rage mingles with cynicism:

Oth.: *I that am cruell, am yet mercifull,*

I would not haue thee linger in thy paine.

The Moor returns to the bed and completes his deed of horror. There is no stage-direction with the words:

So, fo

and it is hardly needed. Then there is a double rap at the door. Before Othello opens the door to let Emilia in, he makes sure if the bedcurtains are drawn and Desdemona is quite dead. We read: "Shee's dead", and two lines later: "Hah, no more moouing." After a feverish consideration he exclaims: "I thinke she stirres againe." And before he opens the door: "Soft, by and by, let me the Curtaines draw." There stands one stage-direction ("smothers her") versus seven implied gestures. The most horrid effect is without doubt achieved by the two words "So, fo". Othello, with his back turned to the audience, stands before the curtained alcove of the tiring-house; the audience cannot see, but (which is worse) guesses Othello's act from the movements of his elbows and the two syllables that accompany them.

Horrible and even nauseous elements are still very frequent in Shakespeare's plays. The blinding of the Earl of Gloucester in *Lear* is only one instance of this; it stands in the same line with Bajazeth's and his wife's death in *Tamburlaine* ("His skull all riven in twain! his brains dash'd out ...") and some of the over-accentuated thrills of the *Spanish Tragedy*. But the very motive of death shows—in most of the cases—Shakespeare's superiority to his predecessors.

There are the gestures of the dead, for instance. (Had the poet seen a battle-field before he could write such scenes?):

Meff.: *Is not that he that lyes vpon the ground?*

Titin.: *He lies not like liuing. O my heart! (J.C. 5.3.58).*

And another victim of Philippi:

Brutus: *Where, where Meffala, doth his body lye?*

Messa.: *Loe yonder, and Titinius mourning it.*

Brutus: *Titinius face is upward.*

Coro.: *He is slaine.*

Messala thinks that Titinius mourns, because he has left the scene shortly before Titinius' suicide (at "hye you Messala"); Brutus, however, is the better observer and attracts Messala's attention to the fact that Titinius' face is turned upwards. This is the dead man's gesture and it must be carefully premeditated by the respective actor. Cato hurries to inspect the two corpses and he corroborates what Brutus has said. Nothing is said of the gestures of the five others, but we may suppose that they are struck with horror at the discovery that he who seemed to mourn is dead himself.

But they all find their individual deaths. The foolish Polonius preserves something of his droll gravity even in his decease:

Indeed this Counsellor

Is now most still, most secret, and most graue,

Who was in life, a foolish prating Knaue.

His last gestures are bereft of all dignity; it is with a feeling of pity that we see the old quidnunc disappear behind his arras: "Ile silence me e'ene heere", he totters when he makes haste. We then hear his "Hoa, helpe, helpe, helpe"; his last attitude, the gestures of *his* death, is degrading and ignoble: he is tugged out of his hidingplace, and afterwards out of the bedroom. Hamlet calls him "guts", and when he is drawn out of the room, he has to offer as much resistance as possible. Hamlet looks down at him with an air of mockery and disgust. The comma after "who was in life" is not a blunder of Elizabethan punctuation: it marks a pause, a gesture of disregard: "who was in life ..." (he seeks an expression of utter contempt; then, with a respective gesture, he continues) "a foolish prating Knaue". The gestures of the very act of killing are different from that in the murder of Julius Caesar. Polonius is dispatched like a rat; Hamlet's excessive hatred is mirrored in the sounds of his line "*dead for a Ducate, dead*" (cf. p. 77 and n.); the two main accents of the alliteration represent the two thrusts: "*dead ... dead*". The difference between Othello's "So, fo" and the angry nervousness of "*dead ... dead*" is tangible.¹⁶

Polonius' death forms a clear contrast to Caesar's. Caesar's case proves that it was possible to give even murder a certain dignity. Polonius is stuck, Caesar is stabbed.

The scene in the Capitol imposes a careful study of the text upon the player, as part of what he has to do is said long before the deed and some of it hobbles behind.

¹⁶ If we regard Shakespeare's knowledge of murder from the gestic point of view, we are reminded of what Friedrich Hebbel writes in his diary (4th July 1844): The fact that Shakespeare created murderers in his plays saved him from becoming one himself.

3.1.30: Cinna: Caska, *you are the first that reares your band.*

3.1.74: Cinna: O Cæsar.

Cæf.: *Hence: Wilt thou lift vp Olympus?*

Decius: *Great Cæsar.*

Cæf.: *Doth not Brutus bootlesse kneele?*

Cask.: *Speake hands for me. They stab Cæsar.*

Cæf.: *Et Tu Brutè?—Then fall Cæsar. Dyes.*

414 lines later: Ant.: ...

For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, ...

Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his Mighty heart,

And in his Mantle, muffling vp his face,

Euen at the Base of Pompeyes Statue

... great Cæsar fell. (3.2.192)

Macbeth fights to the last with grim energy. He is afterwards beheaded and the head is carried on to the stage. But there is nothing ignoble in his behaviour and the audience must have regarded his end as a judgment of heaven.

Cleopatra is not disfigured by death. Her death is the consequence of her life and the continuance of its main activity: enthralling men by her extreme beauty:

She lookes like sleepe,

As she would catch another Anthony

In her strong toyle of Grace.

Heroic suicide is often the end of Shakespeare's warriors. There are two ways of committing it: by stabbing or by running on one's sword. Titinius, Brutus, courageous little Eros, and Antony die in this way; the less spirited are killed by their servants. The Elizabethan stage scarcely offered any twilight as the modern stage does, neither were there any compressible dummy-swords; the actors could not turn their backs upon the spectators, who lined the three projecting edges of the apron-stage. Thus suicides had always to take place somewhere on the backstage, close to the tiring-house. Much was probably left to the imagination of the audience, which must have been very vivid. In the M.N.D. (5.1) the Duke speaks a wise word about dramatic performances:

*The best in this kind are but shadowes, and the worst are no worse,
if imagination amend them.*

Antony's and Eros's suicides are both accompanied by the remark "thus" (4.12.94 sqq.). The boy's stabbing is preceded by a presumably spurious stage-direction: "*Killes himselfe.*" But the stage-direction, as is mostly the case, runs before the actual movement and is, in this, inferior to the particle "thus", which indicates the gesture proper:

Eros: *Farewell great Chiefe. Shall I strike now?*

Ant.: *Now Eros. Killes himselfe.*

Eros: *Why there then:*

Thus I do escape the sorrow of Anthonies death.

But Antony is less successful with his stabbing and he does not die at once—he must be preserved for the scene in the Monument!

... Eros,

Thy Master dies thy scholler; to do thus

I learnt of thee. How, not dead? Not dead?

The passage also shows how inconsistent the placing of stage-directions may be, as there is one when Eros falls on his sword and none when Antony does so.

The deaths of Brutus and Coriolanus have been discussed in the metrical chapter of this essay. It may, however, be added here that we find a most significant gesture in Coriolanus: Aufidius stands on the fresh corpse of Coriolanus: which is typical of Coriolanus' end, as his pride is humiliated in his very death. That Aufidius does so may be derived from the text (Senator: "Tread not vpon him") as well as from the heavily damaged stage-direction: "Draw both the Conspirators (and Auffidius), and kils (i.e. kill) Martius, who falles, Auffidius stand(s) vpon him."

Before we close this chapter, we must cast our eyes upon death in the comedies, or we must investigate rather, if there are any cases of death in these plays. Even such a gloomy play as *M. for M.* admits of no open-stage execution. The hero of the *C. of E.* is under sentence of death, but the ending of the play spares him. In *Much Ado* and in the *W. T.* we find cases of apparent death, both of them visible to the audience; the two women swoon. In the *M. of V.* some of the personages are very near to death, and a good deal of the effect of the play is based on the fact that Antonio has a very narrow escape. *All's Well* leads very near to death, too, and the spectator has an ample chance of trembling with, and for, the heroes.

On the whole we may say that the Shakespearean comedy admits no deaths; but death is continuously spoken of and joked about. If executions take place, they are only alluded to.

II. INSANITY, WITCHCRAFT, AND SPOOK

Shakespeare's acquaintance with the anomalies of the human mind is perplexing. His plays abound in madmen, genuine ones and such as simulate. The sham madman "poor Tom" sometimes acts out of character, but the true insane are abnormal even in their gesticulation. Ophelia is the most striking example of this:

Come, my Coach: Goodnight Ladies: Goodnight

sweet Ladies: Goodnight, goodnight, (4.5.72)

all together five gestures that clearly demonstrate how much that young girl has got entangled in her own world of illusion and hallucination. She beckons to a coach and drops curtsies to an imaginary group of fine ladies. She distributes flowers and describes them, flowers that nobody but she can see. The actress of the post-Shakespearean stage can get further hints from the account of the "gentleman" (in F_1 it is Horatio):

(she) hems, and beats her heart,

Spurnes enviously at Strawes, speakes things in doubt ...

"Winkes, and nods, and geftures" correspond to each of her confused words. With Shakespeare's *mise-en-scène* the gestures must have been terrifying.

Hamlet's "madness" is different: it scarcely pervades his gestures. His words, behind a mask of seeming nonsense, are desperate sarcasm; even Polonius notices that Hamlet's madness is too full of method. The scene in which he shows how to play on the recorder is very dangerous to the machinery of his dissimulation. Who beside the dullheaded courtier would not stop short at the clearness of thought and at the reasonableness of the accompanying gestures? In this scene he is not less reasonable than in the churchyard, where he ponders upon the idea of the possible metamorphoses of dead Alexander. The court takes him for a madman when he speaks to the transformation of kings into maggots; but his syllogisms are as sound as ever. He only says in his passionately metaphorical language what "ordinary" people might say in a logical discourse.

Hamlet's true eccentricity lies on a different level: in his moments of ecstasy he flies into a passion in which his gestic behaviour is completely dissolved. Such moments of frenzy are at the same time long self-accusations of the solitary prince. His soul raves and his body is beyond his control. After the Ghost's revelation of the facts, Hamlet is seen in such a state of mind (1.5): "Oh all you hoft of Heauen!" Here, his "anticke disposition" is genuine. His spirit is troubled by his father's apparition. Taking down his father's admonition has two functions: the spectator is to be shown the decision of the prince to take his revenge on Claudius; but it is more than this, it is already one of Hamlet's "oddities", one of the genuine singularities of this sensitive spirit.

The long and self-accusing soliloquies are proofs of a desultory mind, which reveals itself in the very metre of those passages: the sentences are short and abrupt, the verses unfinished, the run-on lines predominate. The two monologues of Hamlet 1.2 and 2.2 ("Oh that this too too [olid Flefh[,] would melt"; "Oh what a Rogue") are two clear cases of that kind of rage. After three centuries and a half it is, of course, difficult to tell what the single gestures were; only a reconstruction by our imagination may, to a certain

degree, approach the original state of the case. "Too too solid" was probably connected with a double beat of Hamlet's fists on his breast or with a convulsive movement of his hands, as if he wanted to tear his breast in despair. "His Cannon 'gainst Selfeflaughter. O God! O God!" The last four syllables of this latter quotation must be accompanied by gestures of utter despair.

This is not melancholy any longer, but an impatient rage about the too early second marriage of his mother: "A mind impatient." This phenomenon becomes even more manifest in 2. 2. 584 sq. At five¹⁷ places, the line is interrupted, possibly from want of breath. The torso of a line is regularly followed by a short moment of consideration, then Hamlet's frenzy begins to develop again. At last, the prince impatiently beats his head, his lack of self-control is over, thought begins to claim its rights ("About my Braine!"), the hysterical fit changes to deliberation and finally becomes a resolution. The prince leaves the stage with a triumphant gesture which finds its counterpoise in the rhyming distich. Some of his phrases endorse our idea that his gestures must have been near to raving mad and that he gesticulated with his legs as well as with his arms, for instance: "*bloudy; (a) Bawdy villaine*" with its highly energetic alliteration; or the heavy blows of "*Remorselesse, Treacherous, Letcherous, kindles villaine!*" and "*A dull and muddy-metled Rascall*". Or there are such roars of indignation against an imaginary partner, like: "*Who calles me Villaine? breakes my pate a-crosse? Pluckes off my Beard, and blowes me in my face? / Tweakes me by'th'Nofe? ...*"

We have to read the lines slowly if we want to know what the actor might *do*. Reciting his lines with his arms hanging down is out of the question; neither can he sit down or pace to and fro philosophically. The soliloquy 2. 2. 584 is not an aria like "To be or not to be"; it is a very dramatic and even theatrical piece of work.

So if we cannot exactly tell what the different gestures were, we can at least guess by means of elimination that they must have been gestures of utmost vehemence.

If we consider the play from the gestic point of view, we obtain five different Hamlets, and we may wonder if any of them is the true one. We can distinguish

- a) Hamlet when quiet though more or less fantastic. This is Hamlet among his friends and those who know about his secret;
- b) the raving Hamlet of the lonesome soliloquies;
- c) the simulator; his behaviour then oscillates between provoking frivolity and blasphemous gaiety;

¹⁷ 1. For Hecuba?

4. Oh Vengeance!

2. Yet I, ...

5. A Scullion?

3. Ha?

•

d) the philosophical melancholiac; (3.1)

e) the bold and determined fighter of the last scene.

The five stratifications are not clearly separated from each other and the actor who wants to do justice to his part must necessarily be a gestic Proteus.

King Lear's madness is true, though his soliloquies in the storm resemble Hamlet's very much. Their intensity is even stronger. Our metrical chapter deals with his "Blow windes, & crack your cheeks". The hysteria into which he gradually works himself up explodes for the first time when he sees Kent handcuffed. He feels the fit rise up to his heart, but he is still able to suppress it with an energetic gesture:

Oh how this Mother fwels vp toward my heart!

*Historica passio*¹⁸ *downe thou climing sorrow,*

*Thy Elements*¹⁹ *below.*

The gesture of his body is at the same time an inward gesture, helping the mind to self-control. The spectator thus gets a visual impression of Lear's effort to suppress his insanity. The cultured part of the audience probably connected the word "downe" with "mother" (matr-ix, ὑστέρησις); to the man in the pit the threatening insanity was the work of infernal powers ("thy element is below!"). For, according to the New Testament, madness is produced by demons who possess and torment (pinch!) their victims. Thus the gesture of "suppression" came to the rescue of both parts of the audience and helped their understanding. We cannot agree with W. J. Craig, who wants to emend "mother" into "smother". What does "down" mean then, the place of smothering being the throat, from which nothing can "swell to the heart".

Once more we hear—and see—the same words in Lear 2.4.120; the gesture must have been much the same: "Oh me my heart! My rifying heart! But downe."

The imagination of insane people is abnormally strong and they speak into vacancy as we have seen in Ophelia's (p. 109) and Lady Macbeth's cases. Even when wholly destitute, King Lear distributes his soldiers' and servants' pay. "Ther's your Preffemoney." He points at a mouse—non-existing—he thinks that he holds a fork and cheese in his hand; he exclaims: "When I do ftare, see how the Subject quakes." He "offers an apothecary money" and, like Lady Macbeth, he wipes his hand clean: "let me wipe it first, It fmelles of Mortality."

As Ophelia's case is analogous to those just quoted, we may suppose that Ophelia, too, only makes the *gesture* of distributing flowers and that most stage-managers are wrong in giving her real flowers or straw for her business.

¹⁸ *Historica passio*] i.e. hysteria.

¹⁹ *Elements*] i.e. element is.

King Lear's Edgar is always occupied with the demon on his back; he probably makes gestures of stooping. At last, when the trial is over, Lear lies down for a nap, probably on a couch that has been prepared for him, and before he sleeps, he wants the curtains to be drawn. Sometimes we doubt if he really speaks the respective lines: "Make no noise, make no noise, draw the Curtaines: fo, fo, wee'l go to Supper i'th'morning" (to which the Qq add "fo" after "fo, fo" and repeat "fo, fo, fo" after "morning".)

A typical gesture of madness is that of staring at others, connected with the general attitude of the body; Casca (J.C. 1. 3. 1 ff.) staggers to the stage with his sword drawn—which becomes manifest only from his remark much later: "I ha' not since put vp my Sword." With horror in his eyes he stares at Cicero, who consequently asks: "Why are you breathlesse" (Caska pants!), "and why stare you fo?" Somewhat later, Cassius makes the same observation: "You looke pale, and gaze, and put on feare." J.C. 4. 3 is the scene in which Brutus finds a certain pleasure in driving Cassius, who is of a choleric nature, to extremities. He himself remains cold: "Shall I be frighted, when a Madman stares?"

Othello's madness is of a wild and raving nature. His "traunce" is a baroque feast for the eyes of the groundlings. His manner of speaking (4. 1. 44) again announces the fit of epilepsy. The words "Nofe, lips and ears" may be connected with definite gestures, but the rest of the torrent is equivalent to a completely disordered gesticulation. The careful reader or actor can find out what happens without the stage-directions, because Iago soon explains: "My Lord is falne into epilepsie." The patient does not foam in his swoon; to "rub him about his temples" would cause a "sauage madnesse". In Q₁, the stage-direction is "he fals downe", in Q₂ and F₁, he "falls in a Traunce".

Lady Macbeth's appearance in the fifth act has been discussed on p. 38; we might add her final gesture into vacancy with which she wants to grasp her husband's hand. This movement once more illustrates the futility of her doings.

Shakespeare's psychopaths often act into vacancy. We are convinced that there cannot have been a dagger on Shakespeare's stage when Macbeth spoke his soliloquy. E.K. Chambers would have it on a table, which would divest it of its ghostlike character ("a Dagger of the Minde"). And how could it have left the table? Neither can we get reconciled to the idea of a dagger dangling somehow down from a gallery.

Shakespeare's audience willingly took the humble planking of the stage for an orchard and we may be sure that the spectators in the pit actually smelt the fragrance of the fruit-trees; to them the unchangeable background alternatively offered the most heterogeneous prospects. We may suppose that the imagination of such an audience was capable of projecting a non-existing

dagger into the space before Macbeth's eyes. The audience was hypnotized by the actor's gestures, which more or less produced the weapon. The word supports the gestures:

Is this a Dagger, which I see before me,

The Handle toward my Hand? Come let me clutch thee.

There are, of course, many apparitions that must have been visible to the audience, which is amply testified by the parts they have to speak, by stage-directions, and by lines in their partners' speeches.

Banquo's Ghost shakes its bloody locks at the murderer and nods. Caesar's Ghost is not described; it probably stayed somewhere in the back-stage and was made visible by drawing or lifting a curtain.

In Ham. 3.4.112 sq. the Ghost itself gives the necessary instructions to the other players:

But looke, Amazement on thy Mother fits; ...

The Queen then inquires about Hamlet's expression of countenance:

Alas, how is't with you?

That you bend your eye on vacancie,

And with the incorporall²⁰ ayre do hold discourse.

Forth at your eyes, your spirits wildely peepe,

... Your bedded haire, ...

Starte vp, and stand on end.

And Hamlet describes the ghost to his mother. The scene is one of several instances of mutual or cyclic description.

Hamlet's hallucination (1.2.184): "my father, me thinkes I see my father" forms a strange case of a transition to the real perception of ghosts. There is no partner to the visionary, he only stares at some indefinite spot in the air.

The comedies make a certain use of madness, too. In M.N.D., Titania's mind and her discrimination are troubled by the juice from Oberon's flower. The comicality of her gestures produces one of the most amusing scenes of the whole play. In the first scene of the fourth act we see the fairy-queen caressing the cheeks of ass-headed Bottom and stick musk-roses "in his sleek smooth head". Then she kisses his large ears. "Mounsieur" Cobweb is asked to scratch the ass's head. While the latter gesture typically belongs to the comical sphere, the former is comical because of its contrast between action and word or rather between the action and its object. There is not only the discrepancy between Titania's nature and Bottom's natural coarseness and homeliness: he is also crowned with the head of an animal. At last she "winds" him in her arms. When she compares herself to the woodbine and her lover to the honeysuckle, or, respectively, to the ivy and the elm, the comicality of the situation becomes fully apparent.

²⁰ the incorporall] F1: their corporall.

Madness produced by magical charm again occurs in the Temp.. It troubles the relations of Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo and incenses them against each other (3. 2). It again appears in the fifth act, when the courtiers are led in by Ariel and stand before Prospero, "spell-stopp'd".

There is much of madness, though only apparently, in Petruchio's behaviour (Taming, 4) when he practises his cure on Katharina; Malvolio's deportment borders upon insanity, too.

The ambiguity of some gestures becomes evident if we compare two similar actions in two different types of plays, viz. in a comedy and in a tragedy. In the Taming, Petruchio throws the dishes at his servants: roars of laughter in the Globe. Timon also throws his dishes at his servants, but he does so in utter distress and with a bitterness of mind that will strike the careful observer. Gestures are ambidextrous: the spirit of the situation only makes them either comical or tragical, sane or insane (cf. also Hamlet in Ophelia's cabinet [2. 1] and C. of E. 5. 1. 244).

Shakespeare must have known of the manifold transitions from sanity to despair and insanity. He knew that a gesture may look like madness without being it. In K. J. (3. 4), Constance "teares her hair" in what the others regard as madness. But she eagerly protests when they accuse her of madness.

Macbeth is the play of witchcraft. When Lady Macbeth implores the demons of darkness to fill her with cruelty (1. 5. 41), she might be a hag herself: her arms are uplifted, her clenched fists express energy.

But there are the "professional" witches in Mac. 1. 3. One of them produces a pilot's thumb out of her garment:

1. *Looke what I haue.*

2. *Shew me, shew me.*

1. *Here I haue a Pilots Thumb.*

The effect of the lines lies in the contrast between "Looke what I haue"—we expect a coin, at the most a mandrake root—and the horrible truth that it is a human thumb; the audience feels the shock. But the most dreadful witch-gesture is that connected with their "hail". They hold their arms up into the air, their eyes glow. This "hail" in its various repetitions again contrasts with the humble "hail" of Ross, who probably kneels down when he pronounces it.

In 2 H. VI (1. 4), we find an extensive witchcraft scene. From the gestic point however it is uninteresting and quite inferior to the one in Mac. 4. 1.²¹

²¹ cf. the anonymous *Newes from Scotland*, 1591, and Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584; both possibly Shakespeare's sources.

The society of the Renaissance was painfully conscious of the fact that men and buildings had their façades and their interiors, which often did not correspond to each other. The *corteggiano* had to preserve his smiling and perfectly polite face under all circumstances. The true feeling had in many cases to disappear under the mask. The words often differed from the deeds, and Hamlet's advice to the actors ("Sute the Action to the Word") was not for the ordinary citizen of the Renaissance. This characteristic of the epoch could not fail to be reflected in the works of the poet; in most of his plays we find some personage a dissembler. Gloomy conspirators successfully look like the innocent lambs they are not; traitors affect to be perfectly loyal subjects or friends. In J.C. 2.1.224, Brutus exhorts the conspirators:

*Good Gentlemen, look fresh and merrily,
Let not our looks put on our purposes,
But beare it as our Roman Actors do,
With untyr'd Spirits, and formall Constancie*

In the following scene we indeed see them call for Caesar with the faces of innocent schoolboys. It is another characteristic of Shakespeare's technique that he always warns the audience to be careful in the interpretation of what they are going to see.

Edmund, who is the arrant knave κατ'ἔξοχην, arranges long scenes of hypocrisy and deceit with circumstantial cunning. Gloucester, who enters the room (Lear 1.2.26), just sees how Edmund hides a letter in his doublet. It is the letter that he himself has written in his brother's hand; and Gloucester thinks that he has discovered a secret. The trick does not fail: Edmund is forced to do what he actually wants to do, i.e. to show the falsification to his father. All this is given in an easy everyday conversation without once a recurrence to the *pons asinorum* of the stage-direction.

The same thing may be said of the scene 2.1.29 sq.:

Bast.: *I beare my Father comming, pardon me:
In cunning, I must draw my Sword vpon you:
Draw, seeme to defend your selfe,
Now quit you well.
Yeeld, come before my Father, light hoa, here,
Fly Brother, Torches, Torches, so farewell.
Exit Edgar.
Some blood drawne on me, would beget opinion
Of my more fierce endeaour.*

"Looke Sir, I bleed", he then says to his father, and he continues his work of deceit with: "he ... latch'd mine arme." The gestures are again completely contained in the text; and if later editors add "wounds his arm", it is

merely for the sake of the reader; the actor who studies his part gains nothing.

Whatever one may say of Macbeth, he is not a cold-blooded murderer, and his wife again and again exhorts him to control his countenance:

*Your Face, my Thane, is as a Booke, where men
May reade strange matters, to beguile the time.
Looke like the time, beare welcome in your Eye,
Your Hand, your Tongue: looke like th'innocent flower,
But be the Serpent vnder't* (1. 5).

In the further course of the play Macbeth honestly tries to be dishonest; he affects the genial host, which he is not, nor can possibly seem to be. Soon after the deed he proves to be nervous and the second scene of the second act shows him in a state of absolute exhaustion. He starts at every little noise; he sees hands in the dark and he thinks that they want to tear out his eyes, which makes him protect his face with his hands and, in doing so, he holds them up, besmeared with Duncan's blood.

In the third scene he is seriously resolved to "beguile the time". He succeeds even, when he tells how he killed the two courtiers:

*Mac.: O, yet I doe repent me of my furie
That I did kill them.*

and:

*Here lay Duncan,
His siluer skinne, lac'd with his Golden Blood,
And his gasped Stabs, look'd like a Breach in Nature
For Ruines wastfull entrance: there the Murtherers,
Steep'd in the Colours of their Trade.*

We quote this at length to show what amount of rhetorical bombast Macbeth is capable of. "The siluer skinne", "the Breach in Nature" and "Ruines wastfull entrance" are as artificial in the given circumstances as the pompous movements of the arms at "here" and "there"; he points at an imaginary Duncan lying in the vacancy before him.

Poor Tom in Lear is a fairly good dissembler, but sometimes he gets weary of it (3.6.63):

*My teares begin to take his part so much,
They marre my counterfetting.*

This marring of an adopted character is not an uncommon phenomenon; the true nature begins to rise from the depths of the soul where it lay banished and it pierces the frozen surface. This is often the case in Ham. (cf. p. 109).

Coriolanus is not capable of dissembling at all. With a touching awkwardness he tries to catch electors. Some of the civilians stand in the street when he approaches from afar. (Cor. 2. 2) "Heere he comes, and in the Gowne of humility, marke his behaviour". We do not learn what his behaviour actually

was; did he indeed feign humility (which we doubt), or was his proud gait in contrast with his gown of humility (which seems much more probable)? Or is the sentence to be regarded as an imperative for the future: "if you pass him, mark carefully what he looks like"? All this is not expressed in the text. The third Citizen then distributes the parts and gives very careful instructions. The then following canvass is not very Machiavellian: "Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices, that I may be Confull, I haue heere the Coftumarie Gowne." But he does not exhibit his scars; neither does he wear his canvassing gown longer than necessary and he asks: "May I change thefe Garments?" probably with a gesture of disgust at them. The Tribune Sicinius has guessed Coriolanus' true frame of mind when he says: "He ha's it now: and by his Lookes, me thinkes, / 'Tis warme at's heart." Brutus completes this portrait with the line: "With a prowde heart he wore his humble Weeds." This additional remark is of great importance to the actor: the natural habit must not be quite whitewashed by the momentary hypocrisy.

Iago is the worst of all dissemblers. G.B. Harrison, who calls Othello "perhaps the most perfectly constructed of all Shakespearean plays", has beautifully demonstrated how Iago's speeches record the minute changes of his moods and whims; the language in Othello is a seismograph of all the inner processes in Iago's soul, and it is evident that the gesticulation vibrates together with the diction. When Iago is quiet and natural, he speaks prose. As soon as he begins to lose his temper and becomes excited, he speaks in blank-verse. But when others lose their self-control, he gains his self-confidence and falls back into prose again; he affects naturalness—hypocrisy being his nature!—and poses as "honest Iago". This is, in a few words, the theory of G.B. Harrison.

Jocose Iago is clearly shown in 1. 3. 303 (Harrison: Again the mask is on and he speaks a flippant, supple prose). The corresponding gestures are: "Why thou Jilly Gentleman." He probably taps his partner on the shoulder or, as Edw. Booth²² puts it, "Tapping him playfully on the forehead". This is one of the instances of gestic obscurity. There must have been a gesture but it cannot be identified today. Another of Iago's gestures is: "Virtue? A figge, 'tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus", to which Booth adds: "point up and down, to signify good or bad." And then we read: "Come, be a man", with a gesture of tapping him encouragingly on the shoulder. And that part of 2. 2 in which Iago appears as the old reveller, and again and again calls for more wine, is a prose-scene, too.

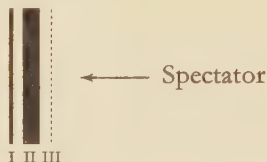
The Iago of the prose-parts ("honest Iago") knows the gesture of the true-hearted hand-shake (4. 2. 209). But when he speaks blank-verse, he is

²² Furness Variorum, I.c.

the hard fighter, a kind of Hagen von Tronje. It is he who draws (1.1.57) and, though apparently only, challenges Roderigo. He steps between Montano and Cassio when they fight, and tries to pacify them. And in the first scene of the fifth act, where he fights even twice, he again speaks in verse.

Hamlet's dissimulation has been discussed above.

Hypocrisy is spread over the natural gesticulation and diction like a second stratification (e.g. as an extraordinary heartiness) and, from the gestic point of view, we thus get the following situation.



I is the actor's personal gestic habit; it is supposed to be perfectly covered in favour of

II the habit of the character he performs.

III is the whitewash of hypocrisy, necessarily interrupted in order to show the spectator the black spots, the true nature of the dissembler.

The players were, as we have shown before, able to creep into a second and third nature. Dissembling was (and is) their trade: "Feare not my Lord, we can contain ourselues" is a line of the players in the *Taming*.

Richard III is an excellent dissembler, an admirable actor. Each of his gestures is a lie and he actually proves the villain he has made up his mind to be. In 3.4 he affects to be unable to raise his arm, which, as he says, is bewitched by someone. The fifth scene, on the walls of the Tower of London, is perfect dissimulation (3.5.1 sq.):

Rich.: *Come Cousin,*

Canst thou quake, and change thy colour,

Murther thy breath in middle of a word,

And then againe begin, and stop againe,

As if thou were distraught, and mad with terror?

As an accomplished courtier of his epoch, Buckingham can. And he goes on enumerating the tricks of his trade:

Buck.: *Tut, I can counterfeit the deepe Tragedian,*

Speake, and looke back, and prie on every side,

Tremble and start at wagging of a Straw:

Intending deep suspicion, ghastly Lookes

Are at my seruice, like enforced Smiles.

The third act (scene 7) is full of counterfeiting and directions for counterfeiting gestures; by a number of speeches the spectator—and the Mayor with his Aldermen and the Citizens!—is sufficiently prepared for the farce that is

going to take place. Richard appears with "a Booke of Prayer in his hand" and Buckingham "humbly" calls from below:

pardon us the interruption

Of thy Devotion ...

Richard, after some show of reluctance, accepts the crown and with a face of disarming saintliness returns to his "holy worke againe". He retires with farewells and humble bows to all sides, escorted by his two bishops.

Hypocrisy is not the only variety of gestic mimicry: if the dissembler hides his true nature to harm others, the player in a comedy may do so for the mere pleasure of wearing a mask. Girls assume the habit of young men, adopting their gait, their gestures, and their voice with the new garments; others appear in masks (L. L. L.) and look forward to the great moment of unmasking. In *M. for M.* the plot is actually based on the masquerade of the Duke. In the fifth act (scene 1) the Duke cruelly plays with his victims until Lucio unmasks him with a gesture of wild triumph over the "bald-pated lying rafcall". As soon as he has done so, the leaf turns and Lucio's face expresses shame and fear when he recognizes his Lord. There is another person in the play who unmasks: Mariana, and she does it very ceremoniously, naming the different parts of her body one by one and pointing at them:

This is that face ...

This is the hand, ...

... This is that body ... &c.

In *As You* (4. 3. 159 sq.), the system of gestic stratification is even more complicated than in the case of the scheme on page 118. The "boy" Rosalind swoons at the sight of the bloody napkin. But when "he" recovers, "he" tries to make light of it (i.e. he dissembles). He even goes so far as to call himself "a woman"; jokingly he promises to counterfeit a man, in which he is not very successful, however, as his partner describes him as getting paler and paler. If we consider that under all this there is the player's own gesticulation and psyche, we begin to realize what complicated mechanism Elizabethan acting could be.

13. JOY AND ANGER

One could write a Shakespearean psychology merely from gestic observations. We shall divide the now following chapter into the two main groups of positive psychic states and qualities and negative ones, and we shall begin with the former.

Positive Psychic States (humour, joy &c.)

Contrast is the soul of Shakespeare's art; Hermia (*M. N. D.* 3. 2. 56) accuses Demetrius of having murdered Lysander, which is perfectly absurd, and she

describes the amorous swain in a way which absolutely contrasts with his whole behaviour and his facial expression, which is all timidity:

*It cannot be but thou hast mured him,
So should a murtherer²³ looke, so dead, so grim.*

In the same way, Helena's persecution mania forms another occasion of amusement by contrast with the facts (3. 2. 244):

Herm.: *I vnderstand not what you meane by this.*

Hel.: *I, doe, perfeuer, counterfeit sad lookes,
Make moutbes vpon me when I turne my backe,
Winke each at other &c.*

The jest of the words lies in their total incongruity with the obvious reality. Nobody, of course, even thinks of such cruelty; she, too, spurns enviously at straws in her temporary madness.

And is there a greater contrast imaginable than that between Bottom's coarseness and asinine head and manners, and the way Titania cajoles him with soothing gestures and coaxing sounds?

Does not the fun of the interlude (Pyramus and Thisbe) in the same play consist in the surrealistic primitivity of the scenic and histrionic performance and the sublime subject of the play? A wall speaks, acts, re-acts, is dismissed, and converses with the audience. The play of Pyramus and Thisbe—even in the gestures of players—must be considered as a travesty of R. & J..

There is another comical effect accomplished by the same principle: girls swearing by their non-existent beards (As You 1. 2. 69):

Touchstone: *Stand you both forth now:
stroke your chinnes and sweare by your beards
that I am a knaue.*

Cel.: *By our beards (if we had them) thou art.*

Another source of gestic mirth is the way people behave and speak, considered as a contrast to what they are. The bombastic speeches of Don Armado, his gestic eccentricities, are only one example of this. Malvolio is of the same description. They represent a certain type of courtiers whose behaviour must have been a laughing-stock of society in Shakespeare's day already. Malvolio must have been regarded as a non-plus-ultra of comicality; when he leaves the stage with a furious gesture and the supercilious remark:

*Go hang your selues all: you are ydle shallowe things,
× | × × | ˆ | ˆ || × | ×× | × × | ˆ ||
I am not of your element, you shall knowe more heereafter
ˆ | × ∪ ∪ | × ∪ ∪ || ○ ○ ○ | ˆ | ù × ∪ |*

²³ murtherer] F1: mutrherer.

Fabian comments on the whole scene as follows:

If this were plaid vpon a flage now, I could condemne it as an improbable fiction.
(Tw. N. 3.4.142).

Osric is of the same family of self-conceited "waterflies". They are the butts of continual jokes, often of a very cruel nature. (Hamlet-Osric; Hamlet-Polonius.) If the word is all, or nearly all, in the early plays, the action joins it in importance in the later plays. The quibble becomes a gestic joke. Hamlet makes his partner Osric don his bonnet ("put your Bonet to his right vfe, 'tis for the head") and when he at last admits that it is "indifferent cold", he has to change his opinion once more as the "mad" prince begins to think the weather "very foultry". Did Hamlet take Osric's cap off himself; did he possibly knock it off?

"Faith, I can cut a caper", says Sir Andrew in Tw.N. 1.3.113, and he accompanies his words by a corresponding series of jumps.

And we have a strange effect of comical contrast when Falstaff, in all his pride and bulkiness, creeps into the buck-basket with cowardly eagerness (M. W. W. 3. 3).

In the fourth act of the same play, the plan of the final stage-business is conceived (4.41). The passage is also a good example of the prognostic style (we shall ... he will). Every little gesture is thought of: the "supposed Fairies" are to "pinch" him till he tells the truth; the Urchins are to have rattles in their hands; Mistress Page means to fly with her companion in "great amazedneffe"; then he will be encircled &c. When Falstaff at last appears with his buck's head on (fifth act), there is little allusion to his gestures; but he thrice mentions his bulkiness ("my tallow"; "the oil that is in me"; "the fattest stag in the forest"). And this, indirectly, refers to his gait and his gesticulation. There is even a self-description in 2 H. IV (1.2.11), when he speaks of his gait as of that of a "sow, that hath o'rewhelm'd all her Litter but one". His behaviour must have been extremely comical when he lay down before the elves and at last took off his buck's head.

In the Two Gent. we have an interesting case of a quibble combined with a gesture (1.1.116). Proteus has sent Speed with an errand to his mistress, and when he comes back, he asks him:

Pro.: *But what said she?*

Sp.: *I*

Pro.: *Nod-I, why that's noddy.*

Sp.: *You misfooke Sir: I say she did nod; and you aske me if she did nod, and I say I.*
Professor Craig's reconstruction of the passage is quite convincing, but a gestic examination of it must realize that as a conjecture it belongs to the realm of speculation. If we read in the Oxford Shakespeare:

"But what said she? (Speed nods). Did she nod? Speed: Ay. &c.", the explanation of "you aske me if she did nod" (Speed) is obtained by inter-

potation of a stage-direction and three more words. In Dyce's edition of the same play we are nearer to the original text, but the solution is far from satisfying: "But what said she? *Sp.* (nodding) *Ay. Pro.* : Nod, *Ay?* &c." To our modern conception of humour the joke is rather insipid, but we have to look at it with the eyes of an Elizabethan theatre-goer. Quibbles were not only for the groundlings in the pit and a joke combining a word and a gesture must have been regarded as uncommonly clever.

Another sort of gaiety is provided by the clowns of the Lancelot Gobbo type. It is a very homely kind of jesting, too, and an exact forerunner of the Viennese Kasperl. A very close examination would probably allow a certain reconstruction of the personal behaviour of one of the clowns of the Globe theatre. Gobbo is especially well characterized by his speech "Certainly, my conscience" in 3. 2. We get a very plastic portrait of the young man when we hear him speak; we begin to see his lanky movements and combine them with his helpless joking. "The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me &c."—he touches his elbow, looks back and repeats what he hears the fiend say. With his gestures he begins to illustrate the wooing of his conscience, to make visible how it hangs about the "necke" of his heart. At last he begins to run and he runs straight into his father. The metre of his language, though prose in this case, reveals the nature of his gestures. We find the actor of the Lancelot character in several plays, but nowhere as tangibly and plausibly as in the second scene of the third act of *H. V.* The boy's speech (line 29 sq.) "As young as I am" is an exact counterpart of the Launcelot Gobbo speech in the *M.* of *V.*.

An excellent example of gestic pleasantry is the scene between Pandarus and Cressida in *T. & C.* (1. 2). The different Trojan heroes pass over the stage and Pandarus describes their qualities to Cressida, with the one purpose of making Troilus agreeable to her. He makes very light of most of them, except Troilus. The joke of the situation is obviously that, whereas he calls Achilles a drayman, a porter, and a camel, he magnifies the qualities of Troilus who passes on the stage in a broken condition of mind. We have seen him in the previous scenes in a rather low-spirited phase and know that he shuns the battle because of his grief (1. 1. 4 "Each Troian that is mafter of his heart, / Let him to field, *Troilus* alas hath none"). And now Pandarus calls him "Prince of Chiualrie", an "admirable man", to whom Paris is "a durt": 1. 2. 244

Cressida. "*What sneaking fellow comes yonder?*" (His gait is already characterized and it quite corresponds to what we know of him.) Pand.: *Where? Yonder? That's Deiphobus.*²⁴

'Tis Troylus

...

²⁴ Deiphobus] F1: Doeophobus.

*Marke him, note²⁵ him: O Braue Troylus:
looke well vpon him Neece ... how he lookes,
and how he goes. O admirable youth!*

Troilus' behaviour, which is later on described as quite unmistakable is so little characteristic that Pandarus may first take him for someone else. At "'Tis Troylus" he suddenly recognizes his error. The contrast between word and action must have been startling: the admirable youth "sneaks" drowsily across the stage.

The gestures and the gait of people are especially well studied in this satirical play, of which C. J. Craig says that it is "more like the work of the creator of the Yahoos than that of the 'myriad-minded' yet 'gentle' Shakespeare." Ajax walks "up and downe like a Peacock" (3.3.253). Cressida "fetches her breath so short as a new tane Sparrow" (3.2.33). Ulysses, speaking of Diomed, even says:

*'Tis he, I ken the manner of his gait,
He rises on the toe: that spirit of his
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.*

But the climax of mirth and parody is the scene in which Thersites mimics Ajax. While he describes him, he constantly assumes his air and mien. Patroclus joins him and the two extemporize a little interlude during which Thersites is Ajax and Patroclus acts as himself. They obviously divert themselves as much as their spectator, Achilles. Thersites excellently renders the absent-mindedness of Ajax with his "hum" and "ha" that call for similar gestures. This scene finds its analogy in the one in which Ulysses tells the Greek princes how Patroclus imitates them all in order to divert his friend Achilles. This incident is interesting and amusing in so far as we have a double caricature: Ulysses imitates the gestures of Patroclus, who imitates those who now get the report of their own caricatures.

The hero of the merry world of the Elizabethan taverns, Falstaff, has been mentioned above. One of the finest examples of what the Elizabethans—and possibly the poet himself—regarded as a good joke is the passage 2.4.422 of 1 H. IV in which Falstaff, in an excess of frolic, parodies the person of his Majesty, the King; a rather bold joke, as the young Prince himself is present and, like Patroclus in the scene mentioned above, acts himself.

Prince: *Doe thou stand for my Father, and examine mee vpon the particulars of my Life.*

Falst.: *Shall I? content: This Chayre shall bee my State, this Dagger my Scepter, and this Cushion my Crowne.*

Falstaff means to act his part in "King Cambyfes vain". Thomas Preston's play must already have been a pattern of old-fashioned bad taste in those

²⁵ note] F1: not.

days and to play the father of the prince with this gesticulation must have been the limit of what was possible in caricature. The tone of Falstaff's words invites the player to extravagant pathos and respective gestures, as when he says:

For Gods sake Lords, conuey my trustfull Queen,

For teares doe stop the floud-gates of ber eyes.

And Falstaff goes on with such good-humoured stuff, approaching sometimes what seems very bold satire today, e.g.: "Thou art my Sonne: I haue partly thy Mothers Word, partly my opinion."

Then Prince Hal turns the tables and, in the same merry spirit, he begins:

Pr.: Do'st thou speake like a King? doe thou stand for mee, and Ile play my Father.

But he preserves his dignity and does not put on the cushion as Falstaff did. The reason for this is quite evident: the prince, even when cracking jokes and playing tricks, will be the national hero one day. And in spite of all that we have seen of him before, he is *not* Jack Falstaff. But the scene shows in a comical way and by means of gestures the poet's occasional scepticism which appears in a more abstract manner in the next play of the sequence, in which Henry V himself speaks of his position as King (4. 1. 250 sq.). He bitterly asks his "royalty": "And what art thou, thou Idoll Ceremonie? / What kind of God art thou? ... Art thou ought else but Place, Degree, and Forme." But one gesture in 1 H. IV speaks more drastically than the king's long soliloquy: a fat toper puts a cushion on his head and takes a leaden dagger²⁶ for a golden sceptre. But the allusion to Cambyzes does not only concern the old-fashioned diction of that play, which Falstaff begins to imitate; it refers also to a technical item, as Vice, the Fool, appears "with an old capcase on his head, an old pail about his hips for a harness, a scummer and a potlid ... and a rake on his shoulder" (Cambyzes, line 123).

Gestic humour as a result of a contrast between reality and a certain ideal—or as we may say in this case: humour resulting from disillusionment (the spectator's malicious joy) once more appears in the career of Falstaff. In the last scene of 2 H. IV, Falstaff and his companions wait for the king's passage: "*Fal.*: Stand heere by me, M. Robert Shallow, I will make the King do you Grace. ... do but mark the countenance that hee will giue me" (5. 5. 6). But when the king actually appears, there is not the slightest joy in his countenance when he is hailed by the shabby petitioners. He does not even speak to them but has them sent away by his Lord Chief Justice. To Falstaff he gives, however, a personal address full of admonition and containing some comforting promises, though also his temporary banishment.

²⁶ A dagger with a leaden sheath; cheap weapon of Shakespeare's day.

Negative Psychic States (anger, hatred &c.)

Not all that is joke, merriment, and seeming joy in Shakespeare's play is truly positive. Nor are all negative gestures, all gestures of despair and sadness, actually sad. In an operalike passage like that in *M. N. D.* 1. 1. 136, the sighs of despair and the respective miens and gestures are signs of a temporary grief only:

Herm.: *O crosse! too high to be entbral'd to loue.*

In the second act we see Hermia and Lysander in the forest and we hear the girl say (2. 2. 151):

Lysander, *looke, how I do quake with feare*
and a few lines later:

I found²⁷ almost with feare.

We are not very much moved when we see Don John in *Much Ado*, of whom one of the personages says:

how tartly that gentleman looks.

But as soon as we leave the dominion of comedy, the slightest change of the facial expression may intensify the dramatic potential.

In *R. III* (4. 2. 26), Catesby says of the King:

The King is angry, see he gnawes his Lippe

The same observation occurs in *H. VIII* 3. 2. 112. We get a whole catalogue of gestures of the King by Norfolk:

*we haue | Stood heere obseruing him. Some strange Commotion | Is in his braine: He bites his lip,
and starts, | Stops on a sodaine, looks vpon the ground, | Then layes his finger on his Temple:
straight | Springs out into fast gate, then stops againe, | Strikes his brest hard, and anon, he casts |
His eye against the Moone: in most strange Postures | We haue seene him set himselfe.*

While the Duke of Norfolk speaks these lines, the king peruses his "Scedule" and is plotting against the Cardinal. He leaves the room "frowning vpon the Cardinall, the Nobles throng after him smiling, and whispering." Again, as in *R. III*, biting (or gnawing) the lip is a sign of anger and a forerunner of a coming revenge.

Spitting at the adversary is a means of expression not uncommon in an age whose Queen even had temperament enough not to despise this "gesture" in her intercourse with the courtiers. We find it in 1. 2. 144 of *R. III*.

Frowning and tears are *eo ipso* not easily noticed by the spectator. That is why they must be mentioned by the partner. It is not necessary that the face be covered to accentuate the fact that the player frowns or weeps, blushes or turns pale, as the creative imagination of the audience was capable of much more illusion than today. On the other hand, the spectator was much nearer

²⁷ [found] i.e. swoon.

to the player and was able to see the finest expressions of a player's face. In Cym. (3.4.13) we hear: "Why tender'st thou that Paper to me, with / A looke vntender?" The "look untender" may have been a slight frown or a wink of the eye-lids or an angry stare. There is one point that we may not neglect, when we read of gestures of anger and grief in a Shakespearean play: the excitability of some of the old players. Of Garrick it is reported that he made his audience weep merely by reciting the alphabet. And other actors in all ages, up to the last century, could weep in every new performance of certain plays, working themselves up into a kind of trance in which they needed no chemicals to make the tears flow. The best example of that type of actor is Hamlet's player, who was not only a product of Shakespeare's imagination:

Pol.: *Looke where he ha's not turn'd his colour, and ha's teares in's eyes.*

(Ham. 2.2.)

Even a rather blunt creature like Polonius notices what Hamlet pronounces in more passionate lines when the players have retired:

*Is it not monstrous that this Player heere,
But in a Fixion, in a dreame of Passion,
Could force his soule so to his whole conceit,
That from her working, all his visage warm'd;
Teares in his eyes, distraction in's Aspect,
A broken voyce, and his whole Function suiting
With Formes, to his Conceit? and all for nothing?
For Hecuba!*

In the fifth act of T. & C. (5.3.110), Troilus tears Cressida's letter with the words:

*Words, words, meere words, no matter from the heart;
... Goe winde to winde, there turne and change together.*

There is no stage-direction, but the stage-business is quite clear. The action reflects sadness and a resignation much more than anger. Neither does it breathe any hateful cynicism and vindictiveness.

But there is yet another way of tearing a letter: in a momentary passion Julia (Two Gent. 1.2.96, cf. p. 48) destroys the letter she would very much like to read. Her anger is a strange mixture of tragical and comical style.

Cleopatra receives the messenger from Antony in a most ungracious whim (2.5). If he were a letter, she would tear him: as he is a living creature, she twice strikes him and "hales" him up and down. In her hysterical fit she threatens to "unhair his head", and at last she draws a knife.

The anger of old Capulet is of a typically southern trend: he is the Italian *paterfamilias* who thunders his grim threats through the house (R. & J. 3.5.164):

Hang thee young baggage, disobedient wretch,

... Speake not, reply not, do not answere me.

My fingers itch,

and we should not be astonished if he actually started thrashing someone.

Fear finds its expression either in paleness or in trembling. Mistress Quickly exclaims (2 H. IV 4.2.110):

Feele Masters, how I shake: looke you, I warrant you.

Dol.: *So you doe, Hostesse.*

Hofst.: *Doe I? yea, in very truth doe I, as if it were an Aspen Leafe.*

Fear and perplexity are in Pisanio's face when he is in the wood near Milford-Haven with Imogen, whom he is to kill (Cym. 3.4.1 sq.). Posthumus' wife at once recognises that some danger is menacing her:

What is in thy mind

That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh

From th'inward of thee? One, but painted thus

Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd

Beyond selfe-explication.

There are two interesting points in this passage: firstly that, here as elsewhere, the speakers emphasize the fact that the expressions of our body only counterfeit the mind hidden behind them. And secondly that gestures and facial expression are clearly regarded as a means of self-explication.

Sadness is well described in Much Ado 5.4.43. Don Pedro meets Benedick and asks him:

Good morrow Benedike, why what's the matter?

That you haue such a Februarie face,

So full of frost, of storme, and cloudinesse.

In the third act of K. J. (3.1.19) we find typical gestures of sadness in the following lines:

What dost thou meane by shaking of thy head?

Why dost thou looke so sadly on my Sonne?

What meanes that hand vpon that breast of thine?

What holdes thine eie that lamentable riewme ...

The hand upon the breast is one of the characteristics of the solitary melancholic; Hamlet must be imagined to have appeared in that way. Not, of course, the Hamlet of the outbursts of madness, but the splenetic prince who acts according to the traditional catalogue of rhetorical gestures.

And there are finally the weepers. As we have said before, they distinguish themselves from the modern actor by their real tears of real grief. A fiction makes Hamlet's player weep. The boundaries between real life and stage-life were comparatively less clear in Shakespeare's day. They may even wholly disappear. The actor on the stage is Lear and Hamlet, and he carries his characters into his civilian life. He appears in the street and in the tavern in the same costume that he wears during the performances; he uses the

same, somewhat exaggerated, gestures and that which was natural on the stage becomes stacy in his everyday life. The municipal authorities of Elizabethan England again and again complain of the gaudy appearance of the actors, their shocking and repulsive manners among the townsmen. But if their ways among the civilians were theatrical, their penetration into their parts was extremely natural. Anger was anger, and tears were tears.²⁸ And that which seems an allegory today and has lost much of its pith by being too often quoted was a valid truth to the actors who spoke it in Shakespeare's epoch: All the world's a stage. The stage, we might continue, was all the world to them, a brave world to fight, to revel, to laugh, to weep, and to die in.

So if we read of tears, we may, in most cases, assume that the Elizabethans saw them; and not only as they saw the horses and armies, i.e. by means of their imagination, but in reality. Their imagination had to deck the stage-kings, but not to magnify their passions.

14. RESULTS

1. Shakespeare practically writes without stage-directions. A careful study of his texts reveals, with only few exceptions, all that the reader and player may want to know about the stage-business. This peculiarity distinguishes his technique of play-writing from that of other writers, but especially from that of most modern dramatists.
2. Gestic analysis allows us to refute 19th century and modern theories that wish to annul the traditional biography of the actor and stage-manager Shakespeare. The poet's knowledge of the theatre was too intimate.
3. Stage-property is used sparingly; it is usually given a symbolical meaning. Scenes that crystallize around things ("stage-property scenes") are generally inserted between two soliloquies or between scenes containing some meditation or study.
4. Gestures cluster together in groups; often so much that we can identify gestic "leitmotifs". Important gestures are introduced long before and they influence those that are to come. There exists a syntax of gestures.
5. A gesture is not only recognized by the sense of a line but very often by its rhythm, and in some cases this effect is combined with the melody of a verse (*dead* for a *ducat*, *dead*).
6. Shakespeare quite naturally implies stage-directions in the text of his plays; but he does so without pedantry and, sometimes, he even neglects

²⁸ Hamlet's player.

both player and reader. He does not make a rule of his method of producing. Sometimes he does not indicate the beginning of an action, and in other cases he "forgets" the end of it. Often the stage-direction (text-direction) follows long after the gesture. The number of gestures implied in the text distinctly increases towards the end of his productivity; that amalgamation of action and word clearly answered to Shakespeare's ideal of naturalness. In his last three plays, however, he seems to experiment upon a new type of drama with a smaller number of gestures: the romances are the cool and almost classical—and in so far as classical: static!—product of his later years. Shakespeare as an experimenter, once more turns away from what seems to have been his only dramatic aim, the word-action type. The new development, however, was interrupted by his death. This is what the statistics yield about his gestic development. There would doubtlessly have followed a new phase of artistic creation, but the possibilities and probabilities that lie in a genius escape prognostication.

Shakespeare's gestic style was neither quite Renaissance nor quite Baroque; neither would his new epoch have been French classicism. His way of making his personages act was as much his own as his diction; it has ever since been followed by his admirers among the playwrights and—according to the different epochs—been regarded as a masterpiece either of realism or symbolism.

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APPENDIX

Gestic Analysis of Hamlet

Italics: Scenes in which action prevails.

Ordinary print: Scenes in which speech prevails.

(!): gestic climaxes.

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|---|---|
| Act I | sc. 1 | a | <i>first appearance of the ghost (animated)</i> |
| | sc. 2 | b | the king's speech (quiet) |
| | | c | <i>"Oh that this too too solid Fleſh" (raving) (!)</i> |
| | | d | <i>"Ile watch to Night" (excited)</i> |
| | sc. 3 | e | <i>"This above all" (sermon of Polonius)</i> |
| | | f | <i>"He waxes desperate with imagination" (ghost-Polonius) (!)</i> |
| | | g | <i>On the cliff</i> |

Details from the first scene:

α = *the Parade ("Stand and unfold")*

β = *"last night of all" (contemplative)*

γ = *"looke where it comes" (excited) (!)*

δ = *the talk of the soldiers (contemplative)*

ϵ = *"stay illusion" (animated, but not excited)*

ξ = *final speech*

- | | | | |
|--------|-------|----------------|--|
| Act II | sc. 1 | a | Polonius and Renaldo (humoristic, quiet) |
| | | b | <i>Ophelia ("Alas my Lord") (excited) (!)</i> |
| | sc. 2 | c | in the Castle: the love-letter, Hamlet reading |
| | | d ₁ | <i>the Players arrive, Hecuba</i> (gradation) which leads to the climax of |
| | | d ₂ | <i>"Rogue and Pefant flaue" (!)</i> |

- | | | | |
|---------|-------|---|--|
| Act III | sc. 1 | a | <i>king, queen, Guild. (quiet)</i> |
| | | b | <i>"To be, or not to be" (very quiet)</i> |
| | | c | <i>"Get thee to a Nunnerie" (wild) (!!)</i> |
| | | d | <i>"Loue? His affections" (introductions to quiet)</i> |
| | sc. 2 | e | Hamlet and the Players (quiet) |
| | | f | Hamlet and Horatio (quiet) |
| | | g | <i>Dumb-Show (crescendo and furioso) (!)</i> |
| | sc. 3 | h | King: <i>"I like him not" (quiet)</i> |
| | | i | <i>"Now might I do it pat" (crescendo)</i> |
| | sc. 4 | k | <i>Bedroom—Polonius killed (climax) (!)</i> |

- | | | | |
|--------|-------|---|---|
| Act IV | sc. 1 | a | Decision: Hamlet is to go to England (quiet) |
| | sc. 2 | b | <i>"Spundge you ſhall be dry" (quiet)</i> |
| | sc. 3 | c | Hamlet's farewell |
| | sc. 4 | d | <i>"How all occasions do inform againſt me"</i> |

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| sc. 5 | e | <i>Ophelia's madness, Laertes and the Danes</i> |
| sc. 6 | f | Horatio and the letter |
| sc. 7 | g | The king and Laertes plan Hamlet's death |
| | h | Ophelia's death (a lyrical passage) |
| | | |
| Act V | sc. 1 | a <i>Churchyard. Struggle in the grave</i> |
| | sc. 2 | b Hamlet and Horatio before the fencing-match |
| | sc. 3 | c " <i>The Hero at Bay</i> " (!) |
| | | d Fortinbras |

CURRICULUM VITAE

My parents are Carl Paul Gerstner-Lips, retired Secretary of the Chancery of the Canton of Basel-Town, and his wife Hedwig Rosa Gerstner. I was born in Basel on March 6, 1920.

I attended the primary schools and the Realgymnasium of my native town; in the spring of 1940 I passed the University Entrance Examination. Preliminary studies in German, French and English at the universities of Basel and Lausanne were concluded with an Examination for Secondary School Teaching in 1944; there followed the year at the Basel Pedagogical Seminary. From 1946 on I have been a school-teacher, first at the Athenaeum Institute and later at the Girls' Grammar School. In 1947 I resumed my university studies.

In the course of my studies I attended lectures and seminars by the following professors and lecturers:

Basel—Professor Henry Lüdeke, Professor Karl Jost, Dr. Rudolf Stamm, Dr. Eudo C. Mason (English), Professor Walter Muschg, Professor Friedrich Ranke (German), Professor Albert Béguin, Professor Walther von Wartburg (French), Professor Ernst Staehelin, Professor Oscar Cullmann, Professor Fritz Buri (Ecclesiastical History), Professor Hermann Schmalenbach, Professor Heinrich Barth, Professor Paul Häberlin (Philosophy), Professor Albert Debrunner (Sanskrit).

Lausanne—Professor Georges Bonnard (English), Professor Gottfried Bohnenblust (German), Professor René Bray (French).

I spent the summer months of the year 1950 in Great Britain and in March 1955 I passed the examination for the doctorate in English and German philology and Church History.

I cordially thank all those who have encouraged me in the three lustra of my academic efforts, especially Professor Henry Lüdeke, who has been an inspiring as well as a patient teacher.

